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Northern Essex
Community College

NECC Observer

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'Tartuffe' seduces audience



Julie Varney photo
Dan Potter as Tartuffe and Orlik Guzman as Elmire appear in NECC's production of "Tartuffe," which continues on Nov. 12, 13 and 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hawrylcw Theater in the Spurr building.

Budget cut \$1.2 million

Major cuts made based on state revenue shortfalls

BY JULIE VARNEY
Editor-in-Chief

On Thursday, Oct. 29, Gov. Deval Patrick announced a plan to close a \$600 million budget gap in the state that included a 7.8 percent budget cut to NECC using his power to make "9C cuts," which gives the governor the authority to cut the budget during times of fiscal crisis.

This is a "real and serious" cut according to President David Hartleb. State funds appropriated for NECC for the current fiscal year were reduced by roughly \$1.2 million, from \$16,000,413 to \$14,756,413.

However, according to Hartleb, this reduction was covered by an approximately equal increase in federal stimulus money.

To offset these cuts the college will receive an additional \$1.2 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) federal stimulus funds on top of the \$3.1 million the college was slated to receive.

This money will be used to fund

one-time projects, such as increasing the number of smart classrooms, replacing computers in labs and classrooms and installing energy efficient lighting.

However, the budget cut still leaves approximately \$330,000 in expense reductions the college needs to make in order to cover the loss of state support for fringe benefits that cannot be covered by the stimulus money.

Fringe benefits are benefits that employees receive that are above and beyond their own salary, such as health insurance, vacation and disability pay.

The budget situation would have been worse without the federal stimulus money, however it is only a temporary source of funding and will not be available next year.

Because the stimulus money is one-time funding, it cannot be used to support ongoing operations or to support personnel, according to Hartleb.

"There is a good news and bad news quality to the federal stimulus money. It is good to receive so much and at first blush to make up the huge cut in state subsidy. However, that is deceiving," Hartleb said in a statement. "The stimulus money will be treated as grant funding for one year only. There is no promise of funds for a second year and clearly no money for a third year."

This will prove a further challenge to next year's budget.

"It's likely that we will have to absorb these cuts and possibly more when we develop our budget for next year," Hartleb said. "We can't afford to make cuts when the number of students counting on us is so great."

NECC was already hit hard by budget cuts during the past fiscal year 2009 and with reductions in state support for the current fiscal year 2010.

The college's state funding has decreased 22 percent from \$19.1 million at the beginning of FY 2009 to the current \$14.8 million.

State support to the college was cut by over \$3 million this year, which resulted in budget cuts of 3 to 9 percent in every division of the college.

The college received \$550,000 less in state funding than in the budget the Board of Trustees approved in June.

"Creating this budget was one of the most difficult tasks that I have undertaken as president," Hartleb said at the time.

The college also enacted a student fee increase of \$12 per credit to make up for approximately half of the budget shortfall.

NECC received two rounds of 9C budget cuts, totaling \$1.34 million, last year in October and February.

Stolen car returned to student

Latest theft increases total number of cars stolen recently to six

BY JULIE VARNEY
Editor-in-Chief

This time it wasn't another Honda Civic but a Chevy Camaro that was stolen on Monday, Oct. 26 from the Behrakis Student Center parking lot, bringing the total number of cars stolen on campus to six in the last six months.

This time the vehicle's owner decided to take matters into his own hands to try to get his car back.

After the theft, NECC student Karl Hutchins placed flyers around campus pleading for the return of his car, which he said was a gift from his father and had a lot of sentimental value to him.

"I put the flyers up right away on Tuesday. I just desperately wanted my car back," Hutchins said. "I was thinking of things I could do to help my chances."

This latest theft occurred between noon and 3 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 26.

Hutchins parked his red 1985 Camaro Z28 in the parking lot in front of the Behrakis Student Center and went to class. When he returned at around 3 p.m. he noticed his car was missing.

"I checked in my head about 90

times to make sure I hadn't parked it somewhere else," Hutchins said. "My first initial reaction was hoping that it had been towed for some reason. I was looking for glass or parts and I didn't see anything, so that's why I thought it was towed."

When he realized that his car had not been towed, but was in fact stolen, Hutchins called the Haverhill Police Department.

He also said he walked around all the parking lots on campus Monday and asked people if they had seen anything.

Hutchins' car was later returned, not by someone who saw the flyers but by the Methuen Police Department.

Police found Hutchins' car on Thursday, Oct. 29, in an apartment complex parking lot on Lowell Avenue in Methuen.

Of the six cars that have been stolen on campus, two have later been recovered in Methuen, two in Haverhill and one in Lawrence.

Hutchins' car was found with minor damage and wasn't stripped for parts, which is the fate of many other stolen cars that are later recovered.

"I was extremely grateful. They just popped my locks and smashed my steering column," Hutchins said. "It was probably just a joy ride."

Only a few days before Hutchins' car was stolen, on Saturday, Oct. 24, Haverhill Police responded to a car break-in that occurred in the C building parking lot.

In that incident, police said a man parked his 2007 Ford Focus on campus at 10:30 a.m. When he returned to his parked car at approximately 11:55 a.m., he found that it had been broken into.

Police said that the front passenger window was smashed, a Dell laptop computer valued at \$350 and \$200 in cash was stolen from the vehicle.

And according to security reports, that same week on Wednesday, Oct. 21, another car was broken into at approximately 11:55 p.m. in the C building parking lot.

When Hutchins found out that his car was the latest in a string of cars stolen from campus, he was further upset.

"I found out afterwards that there was a bunch of cars stolen, that it was a trend," he said.

"I was a little mad I didn't know about it. I might have been more careful," he said.

However, Hutchins is now being more careful.

"I've decided not to drive it to Haverhill anymore for obvious reasons," Hutchins said. "Until extra precautions are taken it's not worth the risk."

Hutchins has a suggestion on what those extra precautions should be.

"I think something should definitely be done," he said. "I think there should be cameras on the parking lots, and that was the first thing I thought, if they got it on tape."



Julie Varney photo

NECC student Karl Hutchins, whose car was stolen from the student center parking lot on campus Monday, Oct. 26, describes his reaction when he returned to his parking space to find his car missing.

Editorial

Get involved in the college experience

EDITORIAL

Walking the hallways at two o'clock in the afternoon, there is nothing except barren classrooms here at NECC. Students seem to flee campus early, going to class then going home as soon as they're finished.

Sometimes it seems like the only people left on campus late into the afternoon are us at the newspaper, the Top Notch Theater players rehearsing and painting sets and faculty members who have work to get finished.

On the newspaper staff, the work can often be difficult due to lack of sleep. However, not only are we gaining degrees with valuable experience but we are also making friend-

ships that will last a lifetime.

At NECC there is a diversity of clubs. If you're interested in politics or international issues there are the Contemporary Affairs or Amnesty Club. The Gay/Straight Alliance Club is always looking for members.

If you are into writing or literature you could join Parnassus or even the newspaper itself. You could lend your hand to others in need in the Community Outreach Group.

If you don't find a club you like on campus then you could join a sport, or start your own.

So we encourage all students to get out there and get involved in campus activities. It will make school more interesting, you will make a lot more friends and your college experience will be much more enjoyable and memorable.

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# 8	Dec. 16	Dec. 9

How to submit a letter to the Observer

The Observer welcomes letters from our readers. Letters for publication may be submitted via email, mail or by dropping off the letter at the newsroom, located in Rm. C-222 in the Spurr building.

All letters must be signed and also include a phone number for verification. Email submissions should include Letter to Editor in the subject line or risk not being received by the Observer email system.

We prefer submissions via email:

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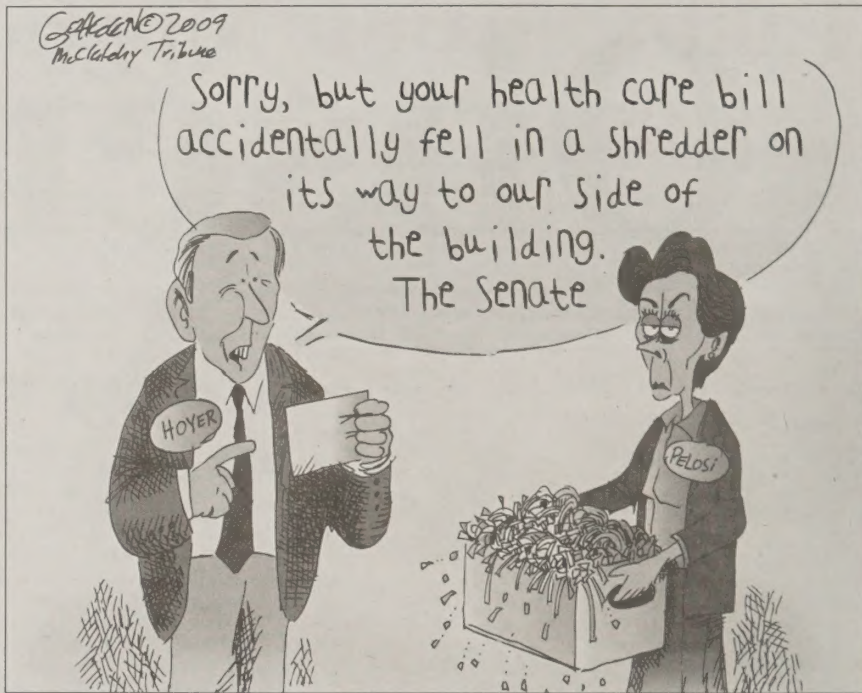
*Include Letter to Editor in the subject line.

But, if you wish to submit a letter via paper:

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Roaming Reporter

What do you think of Maine's recent voter decision to ban gay marriage?



David Zipparo, Law Enforcement
"It's a bad idea."



Juan Diaz, Writing
"I think it's the wrong decision. It doesn't bother anyone."



Henry Lopez, General Studies
"I think it's messed up. They should be able to get married."

Photos/Interviews by Sam Sawyer



Dan Blanchart, Engineering
"(Expletive deleted) Maine!"



Jeremy Meyer, General Studies
"It's not right."



Shantel Valentine, Laboratory Science
"That's really dumb. Love is love."

Opinion

Taking action

The problems of the world can seem truly daunting

By ELISABETH GREEN
Correspondent



"Patience is a virtue." Heard this one before? This statement seems run through my mind like a broken record, and yet, this

virtue still seems to escape me.

I want to change the world, abolish slavery, bring peace to Africa, and poverty. Like a racehorse waiting at the starting gates, I find myself wanting to run, sprint and spend myself pursuing the things about which I am passionate!

However, from where I sit right now, identifying the part I have to play can be overwhelming. There is a disconnect between the dreams and passions pent up within me and the seemingly ordinary life I am living now.

These familiar feelings of frustration and impatience were recently stirred afresh after I attended a discussion here on campus, focused on the genocide occurring in Darfur.

The discussion that took place on Wednesday, Oct. 28 was hosted by the Contemporary Affairs Club. It gathered students and faculty alike as student presenters from Amnesty International gave a brief overview of the issue followed by a group discussion to raise awareness of the issue.

While I recognize awareness plays an important role in impacting situations like this, I couldn't help but wonder: do the things we discuss amongst ourselves in a classroom at NECC really impact the situation? Does our role to bring about change end with the discussion at 12:50? Where is the engagement?

Professor Andrew Morse is the

faculty member in charge of the Amnesty International chapter at NECC. In the course of the meeting he addressed this saying "It is possible for the international community to influence this situation...but you have to be patient."

Ah yes, patience. This is where I go wrong.

Things do not happen over night. It takes time, trial and error to figure out how to affect change on a national and international level.

Furthermore, this requires experience, understanding, education, training, maturity. All these things that are essential and can only come about with process and time.

I recently heard that identifying our individual role in global movements to fight injustice, such as the global slave trade and genocide in Darfur, can best be understood as a Polaroid picture. The picture that comes out initially grey and blurry gradually becomes clearer over time.

This is comforting, because it makes me realize I don't have to have everything figured out right away. I can live a pro-active lifestyle and still have room to grow and things to learn.

Those of us currently seeking to identify our somewhat blurry role in the course of a bigger picture might consider heading over to Amnesty International and the Contemporary Affairs Club.

According to the President of the NECC chapter of Amnesty International, Babak Alian, "Amnesty... is wonderful because it helps bring awareness to a bunch of subjects and bring them to the forefront. If anything, you are just getting a broader perspective and a richer perspective of the world and our position in it."

Time spent waiting might not be the easiest thing to endure, but that does not mean it is without purpose. There is purpose in all things, and even those things that are seemingly mundane develop character.

In the meantime, check out Amnesty International and the Contemporary Affairs Club. They just might be the place to help make this happen.

Music as a weapon

A cruel and unusual form of artistic expression

By HANSEL LOPEZ
Correspondent



I feel music is universal. It's one of the few things that can transpire borders, culture and language barriers and can hold multiple meanings to people. But are there certain instances in which music can be applied the wrong way?

I only ask because on Thursday, October 22, bands like Pearl Jam, Nine Inch Nails and Rage Against the Machine are the latest artists to demand that the U.S. government release the names of the songs played at deafening volumes to torture prisoners.

During the special interrogations the prisoner has their feet shackled to the ground and their hands are bound to their ankles in a squatting position and is subjected to extended periods of time (could be up to two days) of deafening music.

It's no secret that since 2002, music has been utilized as a coercive force in interrogations taking place in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Some would argue that valuable information may be obtained, but I am against this form of interrogation because we can't guarantee the value of the information obtained and it only increases hostility toward American culture. To make matters worse is that many of those subjected to this form of torture are alleged terrorists who in reality are innocent like Ruhal Ahmed.

In an interview with British website, Reprieve.org, former Guantanamo Bay prisoner Ahmed describes in detail his experience with music torture: "It makes you



Wire photo

Bands are beginning to protest the use of their music as a means of torture in Guantanamo Bay.

feel like you're going mad. It's fairly scary to think that you may be going crazy because of the music, because of the loud noise. After a while you don't hear the lyrics all you hear is heavy banging."

Ahmed also stated "I can bear getting beat up, it's not a problem. Once you accept you're going into the interrogation booth and get beat up its fine. You can actually accept it and you can prepare yourself mentally to deal with it, but when you're being psychologically tortured you can't prepare your mind in that way. It's impossible."

So far songs that have been circulated on the internet as being some of the most commonly used unsurprisingly included cuts by Metallica and Drowning Pool. Unexpected tracks like the "Barney the Purple Dinosaur" theme song and the "Meow Mix" commercial jingle are also popular. In case you're wondering why the "Barney" theme was sitting next to Metallica it's because

"effectiveness depends on the constancy of the sound, not the qualities of the music," according to New York University professor, Suzanne G. Cusick.

Well that, and if you had to sit through 24 hours of the "Barney" theme song you would probably be having a mental breakdown too.

All of this raises very interesting questions. How does this make the fans feel? Would it make you upset to find out one of your favorite songs was utilized as a coercive means against someone? Does it make you proud?

I say release the list of songs and artists who don't approve of these actions will not have their music utilized. This is the best plan of action I think because regardless of what my or a select group of artists believe in this practice is not likely to stop. Music carries varying, significant meanings to people, but should one of those be meanings be cruel and unusual? I think not.

Letters

Women's Network

To the Editor:

Women coming together is actually an incredible phenomenon. Here at NECC it has been happening. I come from a background that has been clouded by violence, family abandonment, disappointments and other women here have had their own struggles to overcome. I've been involved in the Women's Network for a few years and the willingness and courage of these women to share their stories; These women, who are at first strangers become friendly faces that help let you know that you are not alone. But more than that, the positive energy that stems from this extremely important and integral Women's Network gives us all that participate something positive to look forward to when there is an event. Feeling down maybe before the event begins, but so happy with

lifted spirits once the event has commenced, giving you ideas and the strength to help improve our own life's outlook and most importantly, a unity of women who support, love and wish well of each other. There are no negative feelings toward each other, such as jealousy and envy, which is typical within most entities where women work closely together. NECC wants everyone, not just women, of any age, race, handicap, etc, to succeed. In closing, the Women's Network needs to continue as it has in the past so it can help increase our ultimate goal: inner confidence and formidable support to be successful and to only get stronger so we can help others from all the wisdom we have accumulated as a fine group of determined intelligent women.

Sincerely,
Lizzy Croft

Everyone deserves care

To the Observer:

I am writing this in disagreement to the healthcare opinion article entitled "Obama's Healthcare Plan Rewards Vice"; "Free healthcare for all, I think not," by Aaron Foss in the Oct. 7, 2009 issue of NECC Observer. I am a journalism major and student at Northern Essex Community College. I must start off by saying I strongly disagree with the insensitive opinion of this individual as he appeared to be highly opposed to healthcare aid.

While I don't condone smoking or overeating or otherwise, I also believe everyone deserves to be helped if needed and guided in the right direction. There are many people who cannot afford health insurance as not all states provide an aid when needed. People are of all sorts and situations, and to be prejudice and judgmental is cruel. We cannot pick people apart as we all have faults and flaws. To state

that one person is deserving of insurance while another is not, is wrong. We are all individuals and do not always have a choice in the hands we are dealt. I completely believe people should take care of themselves to the best of their ability. After all "our bodies are our temples" and they should be treated as such. Sometimes people fall ill without a rhyme or reason; healthy or not.

People fall into desperate times and jobs are scarce as the economy is poor. There are people that only have time to work per diem and would not be able to afford the high cost of health insurance in addition to every other cost in life. If the state or government could offer aid in health insurance for people, even at reasonable rates, that would be fantastic. Most people pay taxes, and I know I do not mind offering a helping hand to anyone that needs it. Doctor visits are arbitrary with their expenditures, and health

insurance companies are even worse.

I went to an emergency room visit for my one year old son, and they only checked a simple blood pressure and nothing was wrong. Had my insurance not covered the cost, it would have put me \$500 in debt; a payment I could not afford. Health insurance is imperative for everyone to have no matter what their circumstances. If someone is in bad health due to their efforts, they should be lead into the right direction. There are people that suffer from anxiety and depression that may encourage their bad habits. If this is the case, therapy is an option and is very expensive without health insurance. Some people could only get worse without help, and everyone deserves a chance and deserves to be treated like a human being.

Thank You,
Jennifer Joan Fay

Opinion

Salem's history is nothing to love

Salem's violent past should shame it, not make it money

By AARON FOSS
Correspondent



I've never set foot in Salem, Mass. in all my life. Some people refuse to shop at Walmart, others won't eat meat. I simply refuse to go somewhere, much less assist their local commerce with a quarter in their parking meters or dollar spent on their streets, that has such a negative connotation to it.

On Halloween each year, the youth of the nation stuff themselves from throat to colon with peanut butter cups and the adults don latex and masks, disguising themselves in all manner of spooks and specters to soiree with friends and dance the Monster Mash. In one little corner of Essex County, lies a town whose name is universally associated with the holiday.

All types of people litter the streets each Halloween, all sorts of Wiccan practitioners call it a year

round home. They are all drawn by the allure of something foul and wrong, all of them at worst stupid and at best, completely ignorant. Salem is infamous for the acts that took place their during the summer of 1692 and since the 1990's used the witch trials as a marketing gimmick, hoping to lure more tourists each year.

In addition to the numerous street vendors and shops selling witch related wares, the town sets off fireworks each Halloween and runs a "Haunted Happenings" celebration. Police cars sport witch logos, the Witches is the name of the high school football squad, and Gallows Hill, the execution site of nineteen people, is currently used as a recreational sports field. In 2005, the town erected a bronze statue of Bewitched actress Elizabeth Montgomery in Lappin Park.

Is it wrong that I am completely offended by this? Actually, I am more offended by the fact that more people simply aren't. Germany has offered official apologies for the Holocaust several times since the 1970's. The United States Congress has officially apologized for 2 plus centuries of slavery we had here. Massachusetts has constantly turned a blind eye to this puckered scar on the otherwise rich history of the Commonwealth. In fact, it took 9 years of struggling and persuasion by The Danvers Tercentennial Committee until final-

ly in 2001, Jane Swift signed an official resolution declaring that those executed were officially innocent of the charges brought against them more than 300 years before. No official apology has ever been offered, even to the descendants of those killed.

A town like Salem has much to offer. The Peabody Essex Museum, the birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Salem Maritime National Historic Site can give visitors a taste of the rich history of the entire region. The largest state college with exceptional arts programs draws a large base of college students to the area. Even the Salem Witch Museum, as it offers only a historically accurate account of what happened, is an appropriate attraction.

However, the state seems bent on only acknowledging the Salem Witch Trials as a promotional tool, to bring in the same people over and over each Halloween night to the "Witch City". It seems to quite happy to exploit the deaths of innocents, caught in an insane religious fervor.

Nineteen men and women were hanged by their necks until dead at the same place little leaguers round the bases rather than an appropriate memorial standing there. The town of Salem should recognize its history for what it was, insanity in a time when even the smartest people didn't know any better. Like Auschwitz, Wounded Knee, and the annex Anne



Courtesy photo

Salem, the site of the 1692 witch trials where 19 men and women were hanged for being witches, draws thousands of tourists a year during Halloween.

Frank called home, it should be a place that attracts people who come in reverence and remembrance; people who come to pay the proper respect to those felled at the hand of something far beyond their control. They weren't just characters from an Arthur Miller play, they aren't just pictures in a history book, they were real people, with families that still

live today, and I'm guessing some pretty pissed off descendants.

Right now, the way that Salem markets itself to the world is as offensive to me as what happened there 3 centuries ago and while it may be the reason so many people enjoy their yearly Halloween jaunt, its negative pall is what keeps me away.

The E-Cigarette

Electronic cigarettes are a safer alternative to smoking

By JOSHUA JO
News Editor



The smoking ban placed on NECC provides incentive to quit smoking cigarettes or seek alternative methods of obtaining nicotine, to promote respiratory and heart health, smoke-free is the way to go. But nicotine gum and patches are expensive and lack the sensation of smoking that satisfies your cravings and oral fixation.

The electronic cigarette is the newest trend in nicotine products. It eliminates second-hand smoke that can damage the lungs of surrounding people. The electronic cigarette is composed of three major parts, the battery, the atomizer and the atomized nicotine cartridges which are also the mouth pieces of the device. The nicotine solution within the cartridge is composed of primarily two ingredients, nicotine and glycol.

"It's not the nicotine that kills, it's the smoke," stated US Congressman Steve Buyer. Many researchers conclude that nicotine is not carcinogenic. Glycol does pres-

ent some health hazards but is generally recognized as safe by the FDA as a direct food additive and would require extremely large doses of oral or intravenous ingestion to cause poisoning or defects.

So the biggest and easiest question is, if it has no tobacco, no tar, no ash, no smoke, no flame and no major health hazards then why aren't we all using it? This is simply because of public awareness, many people don't even realize such a marvelous invention exists.

The electronic cigarette usually costs \$80-\$150. Despite the seemingly staggering price, the disposable nicotine cartridges which contain the nicotine solution are half the cost of a pack of cigarettes. Considering that a carton of cigarettes costs \$50 and a pack costs \$7-\$10, a small investment on an electronic cigarette and atomized cartridges are not only economical, it is also good for you. The atomized cartridges that I have purchased for my electronic cigarette were only \$3 per cartridge and each provides equivalent amount of nicotine to a pack of cigarettes. There are 3 levels of nicotine in the cartridges, high, medium and low to help people quit smoking and even flavored cartridges.

However you may view this product, it is the safer and smarter choice to enjoy or quell your desire for nicotine and public awareness is key. Why? Because if given the choice between cancer and no cancer, the answer is obvious.

Clearing some things up

By SAM SAWYER
Opinion Editor



In response to my article on faith, I received a letter to the editor that disagreed with my positions. There were some very troubling things said in the letter, and I feel I must respond.

The author said that science can explain things like DNA but not how thoughts and feelings exist or how birds know where to migrate. This is simply not the case. While science has yet to explain everything about the human brain, how we experience emotions is not a mystery. It is a combination of our genetic make up, our brain chemistry and our upbringing. We have a more evolved form of chimp emotions. Apes feel many of the same emotions humans do. Our basic emotions exist because of an evolutionary need, and the more complex ones are a consequence of having such a developed brain. The existence of emotions is not evidence for an omnipotent God. As for how birds know where to fly, this is frankly not one of the remaining mysteries of the world. This has been explained in great detail through massive amounts of research of avian brains, genetics, and behavior. If someone wants to know how birds know where to fly, they need only do a Google search. Then the writer used the existence of the universe as evidence in favor of an Abrahamic God. This is certainly a mystery, and can never be fully answered. But a lack of knowledge is not the basis for claims of all-intelligent, all-knowing creator, and it is philosophically unscrupulous

to say so. Science doesn't claim to know things it cannot, it gains understanding based on the available evidence, constantly seeks further evidence and information, and makes educated guesses about some of the rest. If people are going to claim that a God created everything, they must also answer the question, "How did such a God come into existence?" That is a far more daunting question than "How did the universe come into existence?"

The author then made the classic argument that, because life is complex, there must be a creator. As anyone who understands the basic tenants of evolution will tell you, life didn't just suddenly come into being in its current advanced state. Evolution is an extremely long, protracted process of slow advancement, with those best suited to their environments surviving. We evolved over billions of years from single celled organisms, ever so slowly advancing into what we are today. The analogy to a trailer park being hit by a tornado and becoming an airplane might be a fair one. With so many billions of plants that don't support life, statistically it makes sense that a few do. Long story short, Earth is the Boeing.

The next point the writer made was, in my opinion, remarkably offensive. She said, "As for suffering, we believe that humans were expelled from the Garden of Eden, a place without suffering or pain, upon sinning." The author is essentially saying that an omnipotent deity created every creature on earth in 6 days and rested on the 7th. I find it strange that God needs a nap; He's God, not a day laborer. He felt there was something missing, so he created the first man, Adam, out of mud. Adam got lonely, and the all-knowing God, who somehow didn't have the foresight to know that the

man he created with the ability to feel lonely, would feel lonely without a companion, created a woman from Adam's rib. They lived happily until a snake said that God wouldn't know that they ate from the tree, so she had some of the apple, and convinced Adam to do the same. That's a good sentiment, right? Always blame women. Suddenly Adam and Eve were ashamed of their naked bodies. God found out about this forbidden snacking and got mad. He punished Eve and womankind by making her subservient to man, which is not a progressive moral stance on women's rights. Along with being worth less than men, he put upon women the burden of childbirth, and made Adam have to toil in the fields for his food, and then expelled them from the Garden of Eden. And that's why we suffer. That's why the slaughter in Darfur continues to happen. Now is it just me, or is that an offensive view to hold in 2009 America? This is not 1709. We have science and logic that completely and utterly disprove this ancient, sexist myth. I'm sorry, but I have to say it: this is not a respectable point of view to hold. It alarms and concerns me that this point of view is considered legitimate by mainstream America.

Finally, I need to readdress morality. The basic morals we should practice as a species should alleviate human suffering through reason, compassion, empathy, tolerance, and the guarantee of access to healthcare, shelter and nourishment do. These are morals we should put into practice, not religious indoctrination, fear, belief without evidence and body hatred. My intention in writing this was not to offend, but to address some serious mistruths about our world that I felt just couldn't be allowed to go unquestioned.

Opinion

There is no debate on gay rights

Those who do not support gay rights are simply wrong

By SAM SAWYER
Opinion Editor



Gay marriage and gay rights in general are a complete and utter non-issue, or rather, should be. Unlike many political and moral issues, when it

comes to gay rights, there is an objective truth to the issue. All legitimate scientific evidence and psychological studies have consistently found homosexuality to be in the normal spectrum of human sexuality, and found there to be nothing wrong with it on a mental or psychological level. Furthermore, all available evidence shows that homosexual couples make just as good parents as heterosexual couples. Being against gay rights is nothing short of bigoted and un-American.

The only arguments against gay rights are those based on ancient religious texts, written in a time when women were openly regarded as second class citizens, slavery was a legal right of the wealthy, and beating one's child was commonplace. Even those believe that homosexuality is a sin should support the legal rights of gays if they consider themselves to be patriotic Americans because churches do not decide the laws of this nation. If religious people believe it to be a sin, then they can just take solace in

their belief that these people will burn whether they can get married or not, and it's the duty of American citizens to guarantee civil rights to all of our citizens. Also, marriage is not a religious institution. Yes, there is religious marriage, and people can go to the church and get a state marriage blessed. But what many people fail to realize is that marriage is simply a legal arrangement between two people in regards to the state and taxes.

I'm going to make this as short as possible, and I'm not going to cite sources or statistics, because anybody reading this who is curious can go on Google and see the wealth of evidence for themselves. Being gay has been shown to be completely genetic. A person's upbringing really only affects how early they realize and accept their sexual orientation. Homosexuality occurs in nature between orca whales, monkeys, and other species. All the evidence gathered thus far has shown that the gender of parents does not affect a child's upbringing. What matters is if the parents love them and have a healthy relationship. What they do behind closed doors does not matter in households with straight or gay parents. Also, all evidence thus far shows that having gay parents doesn't increase the likelihood of a child being gay, which is not a surprise since it is genetic. To make a long story short, being gay is not a choice, and in this day and age, it is unacceptable to say so. That is not a matter of opinion. The best evidence of this is the following: If you are straight, could you simply choose to be aroused by a member of your own gender and engage in sexual activity with them? Would you ever want to marry a member of your own gender and have sex with just them for the rest of your life? If it were a choice, the answer would be yes.

In a few of the debates I've been a part of about gay rights, I have witnessed first hand the willful, absurd ignorance that accompanies anti-gay marriage advocates. I once spoke to a woman who said, to paraphrase, "If gay marriage was legal, then I could just marry one of my girlfriends and take advantage of the tax benefits." Yes, that is true. People can also do that right now with a friend of the opposite sex. Marriage fraud is simply not a problem in this country and never will be. Do you think a man would try to marry his buddy Bill and combine their taxes and expenses for a small tax break if it were legal? No. If he wanted to use marriage for fraud (extremely petty, basically harmless fraud) he would marry a female friend to avoid the stigma of being married to a man and having to pretend he was gay. An extremely vast majority of people get married so they can start a life together, which involves combining taxes and expenses, buying a home, and starting a family, and having next of kin visitation rights in the hospital.

A woman I was arguing with made the case at one point that, again to paraphrase, "If we don't draw the line at one man one woman, what if people wanted to marry horses, would that be the next step?" No. You know where we as a society should draw the line? Two people who are not blood related and are both over 18. That's a very thick, black, simple, common sense line. Homosexuality is within the spectrum of normal human sexuality. Bestiality is not.

Opposing gay marriage is on par with a racist making the case that it is immoral or wrong for interracial couples to exist. Both are based in irrational hatred, willful ignorance and sometimes, faux-science.

Some people take the strange



MCT Campus photo

Heterosupremacy like this runs rampant in the U.S.

position that such rights are a states issue. Last I checked, it is the job of the federal government to secure basic civil rights to all Americans from Maine (who recently voted to ban gays from marrying) to Hawaii, and everywhere in between. If Mississippians tried to vote to pass a law banning interracial marriage in the state, would the federal government step back and claim it as a state issue? Absolutely not, because it isn't. They would overturn it immediately, even if a majority of the citizens voted for it. Civil rights are not something to vote on. If they were, much of the south might still be legally segregated, because at the time that the segregation laws were struck down, a majority of people in many southern states were still vehemently against integration.

I understand that many people, in fact most people, are probably uncomfortable with the idea of gay sex, especially between two men.

This is understandable. But being uncomfortable with it is not grounds for making gay marriage illegal. For example, I find sushi to be disgusting. The idea of eating uncooked, raw fish surrounded by seaweed repulses me, and I have no intention of ever trying it, but I'm not opposed to the right of people to both eat and sell it. Just being grossed out by something is simply not grounds for persecution.

To anybody who still opposes gay rights, I would put the following questions to you: 1. What if you were attracted to members of your own sex; it was just how you were, you didn't have any say in what aroused you. Wouldn't you want the right to marry the person you loved? 2. If you had a child and they turned out to be gay, wouldn't you want them to be able to pursue a home and a family with someone they love? For the sake of the future of this country and this species, I sure hope everyone answers yes.

Child and slave labor

By ELISABETH GREEN
Correspondent

In the past 24 hours, amongst other things, I have eaten an apple, a Three Musketeers bar, and a banana. I have had three cups of coffee and I purchased a cotton t-shirt and a pair of jeans from Old Navy.

According to a list recently released by the Department of Labor (DOL), through every one of these seemingly insignificant decisions, I could have supported the use of child and forced labor.

The Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Labor or Forced Labor was released in Sept. 2009. This list cites 122 goods from 58 countries in which either child labor, forced labor, or both are known to be used in the production of these goods.

The list cited everything from garment and footwear items, to soccer balls and gold, with gold appearing more than any other item on the list, cited 17 times. Common goods we use everyday also took up a significant part of the list such as sugarcane, tobacco, coffee, rice and coco with cotton cited 15 times, sugarcane 14 times, tobacco 13, coffee 12 and rice and coco each listed seven times.

There is no denying that this is everyone's issue.

Capitalism has created a competitive market in which stores and companies compete for business. Companies lower our product costs so we can get a "good deal" on the things we purchase with our excess wealth that is leftover after purchas-

ing our basic necessities of living. Meanwhile, employees of these factories and supply chains are often children or victims of forced labor. They live in poverty and are forced to work long work days below the minimum pay rates, enduring physical and verbal abuse on the job.

To us, this is just stuff. To the victims producing it, it is their life.

There is a lack of corporate responsibility within the system that monitors corporate supply chains involved in production. Because of this, we as consumers support the use of slave labor with our everyday purchases. Until we can guarantee that our coffee, rice, chocolate and cotton are coming from fair working environments, we are supporting a system that sells human beings as commodities in order to bring down labor costs.

Supply chains involved in production are complicated. The responsibility does not fall entirely on the brand names, because most companies don't even own the factories from where their products come. Nevertheless, they could use their influence and be more pro-active in monitoring their supply chains.

Consumers have the ability to write to their favorite brand names and petition for ethical monitoring of these supply chains. Although it might seem a small thing to do, according to Patricia Jurewicz, the Associate Director of As you Sow, an organization petitioning for Corporate Social Responsibility, this yields a long term response.

"Everyone needs consumers,"

says Jurewicz. "Don't underestimate the power your voice has in industry."

"Brands are experts in marketing," she says. Their sole purpose is to find out what consumers are looking for and provide it. Petitioning for greater involvement in the supply chain can be as simple as asking, "Do you know what is going on?"

According to Tara Holeman, a consultant for Corporate Responsibility out of Washington D.C., the most effective action comes from conscious and active consumers. "Look behind the label" says Holeman. "Transparency and traceability; those are the elements we look for."

Where there is no transparency, it raises the question: what is it the companies have to hide? An example of this is the ever popular Abercrombie and Fitch. Jurewicz says Abercrombie has been completely unresponsive in requests for corporate codes of conduct regarding means of production and human rights. Not only is there no transparency, their lack of response shows a huge lack of concern for human rights in their means of production.

There is a shift that happens through the participation of educated consumers. Consumer awareness and boycotts can get corporate attention.

Students interested in becoming a more conscious shopper can view the list released by the DOL at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocfr/PDF/2009TVPPRA.pdf>.

Smoking ban

By KEVIN MCCOLLUM
Correspondent

This semester's ban of on-campus smoking set out with a goal to create a healthier environment for everyone attending class at Northern Essex. Students are now only able to smoke inside of vehicles they allowed to be in, and anyone not in a car caught smoking will face disciplinary action from the school and could face fines. After the first two months of the ban, the question is how successful has the smoking ban been?

While many smokers voiced their negative opinion towards the ban and claimed they would still smoke, the numbers of people smoking on campus had greatly decreased. The large crowds of smokers near the entrances are no longer there, which shows the ban has been successful in lowering the level of people smoking.

Kyle Trafford, a non-smoking second year student, supported the idea of the smoking ban and thinks it has been a success in cleaning up the air around campus. "I'm just glad I can walk to class without having to go through a wall of smokers in order to get there. Being a non-smoker, having to go through the cloud of smoke everyday to get to class wasn't very enjoyable."

One fear some people had before the ban was in place was that it may cause the parking lot to become just as smoke infested as the areas around building entrances. When asked about if he thought the

ban simply moved smoking as opposed to eliminating it Trafford responded, "As long as I don't have to smell their smoke I'm fine with where they are. The parking lot is big enough so that I'm not forced to walk through smoke anytime I want to get to class."

Some smokers feel, however, the ban hasn't done much in stopping smoking and is unfair to those smokers without cars at campus. One student, who would only give me his first name, Dan, said "I don't have a car here; I get picked up and dropped off. I try to find a friend who may have a car, but if I can't do that I just smoke one anyway and just try to be discrete about it."

Second year student Nick Eaton, who does not smoke, also feels like the ban hasn't worked as well as some people like to think. "I do not feel the smoking ban has been very effective. I always see a bunch of kids lighting up in front of the building." He did admit the ban has been effective in lowering the numbers of kids smoking, but he believes some smokers just won't follow the rule and allow it to be completely successful.

Whatever your opinion on the ban may be, it has without a doubt helped to remove the groups of smokers who last year were found all over campus. It is unclear now if we can call it a full success, but it has most certainly had some effect on cleaning up the air at Northern Essex.

A message heard loud and clear

Program offers a look into the world of deaf people

BY CHANTAL MCGOVERN
Staff Writer

Imagine living in a world where the only form of communication is through your hands. You can't hear anyone, and no one can hear you. This is the world in which deaf people must live every day.

On Monday, Nov. 2, students and faculty experienced this world first hand when they took part in the "Deaf, Deaf World" program held in the Technology Center on NECC's Haverhill campus.

Participants in the program went through a virtual world in which there was no talking, the only speaking done was through sign language. The event was held so that people that have the luxury of hearing could experience the world that deaf people face everyday.

The participants did many everyday things like going to a virtual

bank, getting their pretend blood pressure checked and getting an apple and water from the café. Tasks like going to the bookstore and going to the Advising Center became confusing, chaotic projects.

Deb McKinney, the coordinator of "Deaf, Deaf World," who is deaf herself said that there are many barriers when it comes to communication.

"It is an opportunity for hearing people to live in the deaf world. Because we live in a hearing world all the time," she said.

Sometimes the lights would start flashing on and off, as if there was an emergency, and people were drawn to one area. McKinney would then stand on a chair and try to frantically tell people things.

Many were confused and start talking to others, only to be thrown in jail, for there was no talking allowed in deaf world.

McKinney pointed towards a table and then everyone made an mad dash towards it. As it turns out everyone was suppose to take an ticket.

Jennifer Brady, an NECC student who participated in "Deaf, Deaf

World" said the most difficult part of the entire experience was understanding everything going on around her.

"I wanted to leave, it was so hard. It is amazing I can't even begin to understand how they [people who are deaf] can learn sign language," she said.

Brady also said the hardest part of living in "Deaf, Deaf World" was understanding everything that was going on around her. Brady got sent to jail at least four times for talking. Getting sent to jail just to be able to talk is a opportunity most deaf people wish they could have.

All of the participants in "Deaf, Deaf World" were awarded with a pencil and certificate from this awakening event and a new perspective on life from this eye opening experience.

"Deaf, Deaf World" was sponsored by the NECC Deaf Studies Program, the Diversity Committee, the Cluster for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Gallaudet University and many amazing students that made everyone understand the way deaf people live life.



NECC courtesy photo

NECC American Sign Language student Jeffrey Barbuto signs to participants in a simulation of a deaf person registering for classes at the "Deaf, Deaf World" program held on Nov. 2.

Help is available Day of Writing

Students looking for extra math help have a place to go

BY CHANTAL MCGOVERN
Staff Writer

Sometimes the Red Bull doesn't kick in until the end of your two hour math class and not when your professor is talking about a concept. Gaining understanding of the concept can be difficult especially if your math test is only two days away. Luckily NECC has math labs on both the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses, treasured by students struggling with mathematical difficulties.

"We focus primarily on the developmental math courses but all students are welcome," Joseph Scascitelli, the director of the math labs said. "Students can come in as often as they want to."

Tracy Gichereau, a tutor at the Haverhill campus math center said that students make the tiniest mistakes which cause them the most problems.

"Basic Algebra I students have trouble understanding the sign rules. In Basic Algebra II they have trouble with the quadratic and linear equations and graphing and factoring,"

Gichereau said.

The Math Lab staff also is putting on a lecture series. All students may attend the free sessions that cover topics like simplifying rational expressions, word problems, and factoring. There is even a review for finals for students in Basic Algebra II.

"We put on the lecture series because these are problems they have," said Gichereau.

Students often are embarrassed to raise their hands and ask their professors questions. At the Math Center, the help students get is anonymous and they can walk in as often as they need to for help. The staff is ready to answer any questions and help students with all their math related concerns.

"Sometimes students in a class of twenty won't raise their hands," Gichereau said.

NECC student Annette Costantin said, "I like that at the math center they can take the material in my book and relate it back to my online homework. It is very helpful to go there."

"People that do use it say why don't other students utilize use this," added Gichereau.

The Math Center is located in room C201 on NECC's Haverhill campus and in room LA103 on the Lawrence campus.



Julie Varney photo

Students use the resources available in the math lab.

Students' work can be viewed at NECC gallery online

BY KIM DEPIERO
Correspondent

He didn't give his name. His telling account of heroin addiction, home-breaks, prison, rehab and a near death overdose made it understandable. Nevertheless, now in recovery, the student underneath the dusty Patriots cap, still baby-faced, came to hear and be heard.

So, for ninety-minutes, on Oct. 20, the Bentley Library was awash with memoir, monologue, haiku, heartbreak and turtles in Bodwell Pond.

The 50 or so students and faculty in attendance came to a reading to commemorate the National Day on Writing, the day officially designated by the United States Senate to recognize writing's expanded role in the lives of modern Americans.

The campus event was also a kickoff for the unveiling of the National Council of Teachers of English, National Gallery of Writing - a virtual exhibit for every type of writing and every type of writer.

"The National Gallery of Writing is a ... website where people who perhaps have never thought of themselves as writers - mothers, bus drivers, fathers, veterans, nurses, firefighters, sanitation workers stockbrokers - select and post writing that is important to them ... from letters to lists, memoirs to memos," according to the National Gallery of Writing website.

Associate Professor of English, Paul Saint-Amand, describes the gallery as a "celebration of the act of writing ... going out to the public sphere. ... It's a great opportunity for the college community to be seen nationally."

"We have a lot of great writers," he said.

Professor of English, Joanna Fortuna, is not surprised.

"Sometimes they don't even know they have it. That's the fun of it," she said.

Fortuna, herself passionate about poetry, recited her own work: "Snow," "Negative Space," and "Another Chance," at the event.

NECC student, Francisco Baez didn't think he could write poetry, said Saint-Amand. It was clear as Baez left the lectern that he had a different opinion. His poem, "Love Is A Wave," drew the applause of the group and a grin from Baez, who remarked on his inspiration and success saying, "Everyone falls in love. It came out good!"

NECC will have its own gallery to showcase these writers' works.

Saint-Amand and Adjunct Professor of English, Patrick Lochelt will serve as curator and co-curator of a gallery exclusive to NECC students, faculty and staff, "a room of our own," said Saint-Amand. The college's gallery will be housed within the larger National Gallery of Writing. Submissions will be accepted through June 1, 2010.

The gallery does prohibit literary and artistic work it deems inappropriate, relating mostly to pornography, obscenity and violence. A full description is available on the gallery website.

With those exceptions, Saint-Amand described acceptable genre for submission as "wide-open." Any writing that has significance to the writer is worthy, including the not so obvious, such as text messaging and blogging.

"Really great graffiti, that's not obscene, that would be great too. It's really about the act of writing. ... This is non-judgmental," he said.

Adjunct Professor of Economics, David Fagerstrom, Sr., is quite familiar with the act of writing. His job requires a good deal of business-oriented written work, he said. However, the prose Fagerstrom shared with the gathering, and submitted to the college gallery, was



Julie Varney photo

NECC student Sarah Argenbright reading her poem "Just Jelly Jumbled Junk" at the National Day of Writing event at NECC on Oct. 20.

more personal in nature.

"The Turtle's Wish," documents a nostalgic outing shared by Fagerstrom, his 3-year old son and a turtle rescue in Bodwell Pond, Salem N.H.

When asked why he choose to write about the event, Fagerstrom replied "I do it for the fun of it."

General information about the National Gallery of Writing can be found at <http://galleryofwriting.org>.

For submissions to the NECC gallery, visit <http://galleryofwriting.org/galleries/358779>.

News

Theater dedicated in honor of late dean

Renamed the Chester W. Hawrylcw theater

BY JULIE VARNEY
Editor-in-Chief

The curtain rose on a new production and a new theater at NECC on Friday, Nov. 6.

The premiere of "Tartuffe" marked the opening of the theater on the third floor of the Spurk building, formerly entitled the Top Notch Theater after NECC's Top Notch Players, officially renamed the Chester W. Hawrylcw Theater in honor of the late dean of humanities at NECC.

A gala celebration and performance of "Tartuffe" was held on Sunday, Nov. 8 to honor the many donors who contributed to the project.

Donors were able to view the plaques that were placed on the seats in the theater that recognized Hawrylcw and the many others who donated by "buying" chairs and making other contributions.

Chester "Chet" Hawrylcw passed away suddenly in 2002 at the age of 58.

He was employed by NECC for 32 years, first as an American history and government professor and later as associate dean of humanities, social sciences and human services.

Hawrylcw was an avid supporter of the arts across campus and was a beloved friend and mentor to many



Julie Varney photo

A plaque honoring Chester W. Hawrylcw is displayed in the theater which now carries his name.

staff and students.

"We decided to honor Chet for those of us who knew him before we all retire," Susan Sanders, coordinator of the Theater Program, said to the audience at the opening night of "Tartuffe." "This has been a long time coming so we're really happy about it."

The original plan was to convert lecture hall A into a larger theater space in his honor.

"The decision was made to fix up

Top Notch and name it for Chet," Sanders said.

The theater was renovated over the summer and received new floors, a state-of-the-art lighting system and a new communications system that connects the control booth to backstage.

The seats were also recovered in a new navy blue fabric, with a special section in the middle of the theater covered in purple fabric that mark the Hawrylcw family seats.

Mayoral debate held at NECC

Fiorentini tops Mitchitson in the Haverhill election

BY HOPE M. HUNT
Correspondent

Just prior to Haverhill's city elections on Nov. 3, the two mayoral candidates, John Mitchitson and the incumbent Mayor of Haverhill James Fiorentini, met to debate key issues at NECC on Wednesday, Oct. 28.

Candidates fielded questions pertaining to the city's burgeoning debt, the dilapidated state of the city's downtown region (particularly Merrimack St.), the state of the public school system and whether or not they would agree to take the "honesty pledge," which would require them to resign if they were caught lying.

Mitchitson previously served as Haverhill's City Council president and is Chairman of Trustees for Hillview Montessori Charter School.

"I want to be mayor because I care about Haverhill," said John Mitchitson in his opening remarks.

Mitchitson argued that Haverhill has remained stagnant under its current leadership, Mayor Fiorentini.

"The real bottom line is we (city of Haverhill) do not manage our money well," said Mitchitson in criticism of the current administration.

Fiorentini defended the current administrations' budget, explaining that Haverhill's bond rating has not dropped a single point in this time of

economic hardship. Fiorentini also highlighted all the new sources of recurring revenue that have come to the city, mainly businesses such as Brooks Brothers, Lowe's, and Target.

Fiorentini has been mayor of Haverhill for three terms; even his campaign signs boast of his "Proven Leadership."

Multiple times during the debate Fiorentini referred to the accomplishments of his current term, while suggesting that his opponent would require "on the job training" if elected.

Fiorentini also alluded that Mitchitson's intended reforms would require an increase of Haverhill residents' taxes.

Both candidates agreed that there was room for improvement when referring to the public school system, which spends on average \$25 per student for textbooks, whereas the average spending should be closer to \$75 per student.

Both candidates also agreed that there needed to be an increase in foot traffic to the downtown region, which would require an increase in businesses in the area.

Peggy Kruse, of the American League of Women Voters, served as moderator of the debate, which was co-sponsored by The Eagle Tribune and Team Haverhill, an organization that hosts discussion forums so Haverhill voters can make an informed decision.

Fiorentini was re-elected to a fourth term as mayor on Tuesday, Nov. 3, defeating Mitchitson 7,154 votes to 5,122.



James Fiorentini



John Mitchitson

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Sweatpants stolen from bookstore



Monday, Oct. 26 - Sweatpants were stolen from the bookstore in the student center, 9:45 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 26 - A vehicle was stolen from lot #2 of the Behrakis Student Center, 3:15 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 28 - Remote controls were missing from two TV's on the lower level of the Lawrence campus, 6 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 30 - A student became ill in a nursing class on the Lawrence campus, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 4 - An ambulance was called for a student with chest pains in the C building, 8:55 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 5 - An ambulance was called for a student with chest pains in the C building, 8:55 a.m.

Security Log

With the help of Eagle Security, this security log has been compiled to inform students and staff about the incidents requiring assistance from Eagle Security on the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses.

This log covers incidents from Oct. 17 to Nov. 6.

Wednesday, Oct. 21 - A vehicle was keyed in lot #1, 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 21 - A car was broken into in lot #7 of the C building, 11:55 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 24 - A car was broken into in lot #4 of the C building, 12:30 p.m.

Transfer fair on campus

Students explore options available to them after NECC

BY S.J. AUCHTERLONIE
Correspondent

Admissions representatives from 55 four-year public and private colleges met with students on Wednesday, Oct. 21, for NECC's College Transfer Day in the Technology Center on the Haverhill campus. Students were advised to attend regardless of their year of graduation.

Transfer and Academic Adviser at NECC Rosalie Catalano organized Transfer Day, which is in its seventh year. Catalano hopes to get students excited about furthering their education past what NECC has to offer and transferring to a four-year institution.

"This is a fabulous event for students to look at colleges all in one place, rather than having to travel from campus to campus," Catalano said.

In theory, that sounds perfect, but location and geographic surroundings can be a high priority when choosing which school to attend. With a campus visit, prospective students can observe faculty and investigate the resources each school has to offer.

Representatives from colleges all across Massachusetts and New Hampshire sat at designated tables, eager to assist students with their



Julie Varney photo

NECC students were able to talk with admission representatives at the Transfer Day fair on Oct. 21.

questions and concerns. For three hours students of all ages lingered through the assembly, some with their transcript and notebooks in tow, looking for options.

Most students at the event seemed to be wandering about, collecting brochures, pens, stickers and everything else the colleges were giving away as recruitment tactics.

"We have 55 colleges here, all of the UMASS campuses, all state schools, Emerson, and Babson," Catalano enthusiastically explained. "It's Babson's first time at the event."

Students were able to get themselves on mailing lists for particular

colleges, inquire about joining the Armed Forces and even apply for admission to the college of their choice.

Catalano also mentioned a special opportunity that was available at the Transfer Day fair.

"Some schools here do on the spot admissions, which is something a lot of students do," Catalano said.

The event highlighted transfer opportunities for both full and part-time students. Even if students didn't apply to a school or hadn't had thoughts of life after NECC, one thing is certain: It's never too early to think about transferring.

Events
Calendar

12 THURSDAY

• The Top Notch Theater Players' performance of Moliere's "Tartuffe" be performed at 7:30 p.m. in the Hawryliw Theater on the third floor of the Spurr building. Additional performances will be held on Nov. 13 and 14 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$10 for general admission, \$8 for students and seniors.

For more information, contact Susan Sanders at 978-556-3374.

13 FRIDAY

• The Amnesty International film series presents "A Film about Darfur" at 2 p.m. in room E-155.

For more information about the film or the club Amnesty International, contact Professor Andrew Morse at 978-556-3316 or professor Stephen Slaner at 978-556-3528.

Let the Observer know what events your club, team or office are planning. Please e-mail the relevant information to: observer@necc.mass.edu. Be sure to include "calendar" in the subject line.

Winter
Ball

BY CHANTAL MCGOVERN
Staff Writer

The DJ has been booked and tickets are being sold for the 2nd Annual Winter Ball on Friday, Nov. 20. The dance is being put together by the students in the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Club.

There will be a potluck dinner from 6 to 7 p.m. and the dance will be held from 7:30 to midnight in TC103.

"The dance is going to be semi-formal so dress up," said Isabelle Gagne, faculty adviser for the GSA.

Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door. GSA is going to be selling tickets as well as chocolate in the C-building lobby on Nov. 16, 18 and 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The members of GSA have already raised \$675 dollars from selling scrumptious mouth watering treats in the C-building lobby. They said there will be more bake sales to take place in the near future and there will even be homemade chocolate lollipops.

The President of the GSA, Kyle Black, said that, if they raise enough money, they will be going to Buffalo, N.Y. for the New England Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender conference taking place April 16-18. The students in GSA went last year and would like to go again.

The dance and GSA meetings are open to all students.

"We want more people to join the Gay Straight Alliance Club and you don't have to be gay to join either," Black said.

"I mean this is a club that requires as much effort as you want to put into it. It is all about being friends and doing things together," Gagne added.

Tickets can be purchased at Gagne's office in C314B or you can email her at igagne@necc.mass.edu.

Get more for your buck at NECC

Going to a
community college
pays in the long run

BY BRITTANY HADDAD
Correspondent

It's one of the most influential decisions you'll make in your life. Where will you get your college education? Some choose private schools that take forty or so years to pay off, some choose large universities where you learn in a class of 500-1000 students in large lecture halls, some go to smaller more quaint schools where the professor actually teaches the class and knows your name.

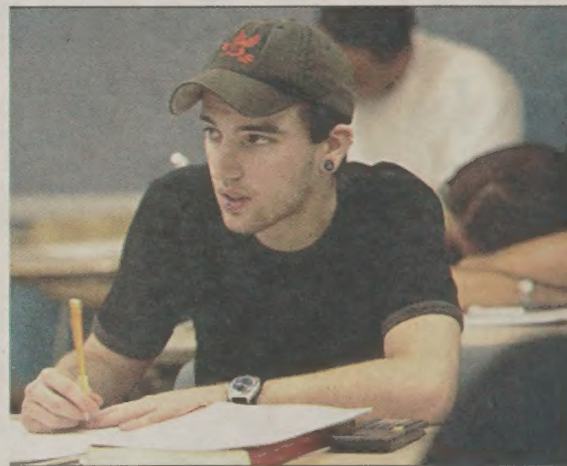
Like all of us here, some choose to go to community college. I believe the benefits of attending community college are great. Students who begin their education here can earn the general college credits they'll need at any other school for a fraction of the cost. The chance to get your associates degree in two years is a plus too. When you do decide to transfer to a four-year college they see that you already have a degree, which is impressive. Community colleges make up one of the largest sectors of American higher education. Today more than 6 million students attend approximately 1,200 public and independent community colleges throughout

the United States. Being here for the past two years, I've found a more diverse atmosphere than most large universities promote that they have. I've been in classes with students who were closer to my parent's age than mine. I've had classes where there were students in high school getting a head start on their college education, and some who already have some college under their belt already.

Brandon Bernier, a student at NECC, said "I've been to a private school before coming to NECC, and it's been a great experience here so far."

All in all you can never assume everyone here is just like you are. I find these different approaches to a degree extremely interesting. One of the greatest difference between community college and say a large university is the accessible faculty. Here at NECC, your professor is there for you. The professor's job at a community college is primarily to teach their students in the classroom. At many large universities it is priority for a professor to be taking part in research in their fields and publishing work on it, leaving the students needing teaching assistance and non-accessible professors.

Small classes also play a great role in why community college students are so successful. With small class sizes your professors know your name, if they're good at that sort of thing, and this means indi-



Courtesy photo

With small classes at NECC, professors will be able to tell if you're paying attention or sleeping.

visualized attention and accessible professors for questions help with studying or reviewing for an exam, even asking for critique on a paper before you pass it in. At community college students are not numbers and are less likely to get lost in the crowd.

Amanda Leach, once a student at University of Rhode Island now attends NECC said, "At URI I would be in lecture halls with close to 400 other students and not with

the professor listed on my class schedule, it would be a TBA. The class sizes here at NECC are much smaller, but there's better interaction between students and professors."

If you're not convinced you're in the right place, you should be. Take it from someone who's been to a Big 10 division one school, and has found more success at Northern Essex. You're in the right place for a great start to your future.

Let's give credit
to the non-credits

Non-Credit courses
offer a broad range
of skills for students.

BY ERIKA GIRARD
Correspondent

If you're looking for a hobby, to get out of the house for an hour, or if you need a change in your life, you might want to check out the non-credit classes that are offered by Northern Essex. The list of categories is very diverse with everything from cooking to photography, public speaking to organizing. Some of the classes are at the school but most are off campus at sites nearby in Methuen and Groveland.

The classes aid those who are interested in business, whether developing skills or making their own business more marketable, as well as a ton of personal enrichment classes. I recently signed up for a couple of dance classes, one of which started this past week. It is an hour long, one day a week for six weeks, and is inexpensive. It's not only a good way to get out of the house with the cold weather approaching, but it is fun and a good workout too. The class is nice because they put a reasonable limit on how many people can join and is usually a small crowd.

You don't have to be enrolled at NECC as a student to take these classes, so you can grab a friend to join or even talk a significant other to

talking up a class like ballroom dancing. Most classes run several weeks while others are a one evening class which can easily suit anyone's busy schedule. The lists of courses offered are accessible through the website under non-credit courses. I encourage everyone to look because what you see may surprise you and you are certain to find something that might interest you. Some interesting courses listed in the personal enrichment section are: introduction to stained glass, gardening herbs and floral design, interior design, flight instruction, hypnosis, foreign language, guitar, self defense, and yoga. This is only a fraction of what is available! Each category has variations of the course in different classes. Such as cooking, you can learn to make pasta, Spanish cuisine, and spicy dishes. If you are a business owner or would like to be, there are many courses that can assist you with your goals.

If you are a person working in customer service, public speaking, and sales are some courses that are offered. NECC also offers certificate programs such as wedding planning, bartending, and real estate. The possibilities are endless! Many students have had a good experience with these courses and would recommend them. We all have some extra time on our hands and could use a little excitement now and then. It's educational and fun and a great way to interact and bond with the people you love and with whom you'd like to spend more time. It would even make a great Christmas gift!

Families in need
of food

Food drives gives
hope to local families
for the holidays

It's that time of year again! Community Outreach Group is running its annual food drive and they're looking for help from all of you.

Last year, COG was able to collect over 2000 canned goods and they're looking to meet that number again.

On Monday, Nov. 16, COG will be in the C lobby from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. collecting any monetary or food donations. There will also be food collection bins located in the C lobby,

the library and in the student center, both upstairs and by the registration desk. So please if you can spare that extra can of tomato or chicken soup, there are families all over the Merrimack Valley in the need. All food donations collected this year will be going to Our Neighbor's Table in Amesbury and all monetary donations will be going to Emmaus House in Haverhill.

If you have any questions feel free to contact COG member Reanne Malesky at rtmalesky@yahoo.com. Let's work together to make Thanksgiving a time not only to celebrate with close friends in family, but a time to help out your local community.



Wire photo

The Community Outreach Group hopes to meet the large number canned goods they collected last year

Read the Observer online:

www.necc.mass.edu/observer

Arts & Entertainment

From sweet to 'Unsweetined'

Don't judge a book, or a person, by its cover

By NICOLE SCOPA
Arts & Entertainment Editor



All of you, I'm sure at one point or another, have seen the show "Full House." It was the top hit show of the '90's. If you've watched it, I'm also sure you remember cute little Stephanie, the middle child who always seemed like she could do no wrong. However, is that really true or is that what she wanted you to believe? The girl who played Stephanie, Jodie Sweetin, now 27 years of age, proves to us that she is no Stephanie Tanner.

Just having her personal memoir, "Unsweetined" published and released on Nov. 3, Sweetin tells of her not so sweet past. This memoir tells us all about her acting career, her addiction problems, her two marriages, and her daughter, Zoie. The memoir does not sugar coat anything, it's unvarnished and painfully honest.

In the introduction of her book, according to Entertainment Weekly's Web site, Sweetin writes that there

are "things that I'm too horrified to tell anyone."

These "things" being her alcohol and substance abuse of drugs like meth, coke and ecstasy.

The alcohol addiction started when she was 14, only a year after "Full House" ended, when she had her first drink at her co-star Candace Cameron's wedding. As for the drug addiction, that didn't start until she was in her 20's and experimenting with pot, which led to her substance abuse. In her book, Sweetin said she would return home on weekends and sleep off her week of revelry to "put myself back together."

When Sweetin spoke on "The Today Show" with Matt Lauer he asked her a few personal questions about her addictions. One in particular regarding her so called recovery tour in which she was to give a speech to students at Marquette University on recovery and how it feels to be clean and sober and he said she was "anything but." She agreed to doing that while on the tour.

"I don't think I was in a place in that point of my life to do what it took to be honest and to get to a place where what I was saying was actually true and that I was actually living by those principles of my life," Sweetin said.

Lauer said how it was "an amazing contradiction" since she had her face "stuffed in drugs" 8 hours before giving her speech.

"I was leading two completely different lives. And that was some-

thing I had done almost my whole life, be two different people," she also told Lauer.

Everyone expected her to be someone she wasn't.

"Going to school, everybody expected you to be Stephanie Tanner. Establishing a separate entity from Stephanie after all those years. I did everything I could in the beginning to be everything but Stephanie Tanner," she said.

Many people may be against Sweetin and say she's nothing but trash and they wouldn't read her book, but honestly I would read this book.

I understand that a lot of people come out with their autobiographies about their drug addictions, but even though they say that they're done for good, they're really not. However, I think Sweetin will be clean for now on thanks to her daughter. Sweetin said Dec. 8 marks the one-year of her being clean, and I think it'll stay that way.

When you have a baby, it can change your whole life as far as what you do and don't do anymore. It's especially important for Sweetin to remain clean after she was investigated by child services after she admitted to be driving with Zoie in the car while being under the influence of alcohol. She said that she hopes her daughter will never have to see the bad things she's done before.

Drugs and alcohol abuse are far from good, and I don't think that Sweetin was right at all for doing this, but at least she's finally being



Photo courtesy of abcnews.com

Jodie Sweetin's major transformation from "Full House" sweetheart to a drug user and abuser.

honest. I'm sure it was hard for her to have to deal with playing the roles of two different people in her life. I could see how she would have to show the world that it's time to take off the mask and reveal her true self. The sad thing is she ended up spending \$60,000 on drugs.

For some reason it seems like all famous people, maybe not all but a good chunk, end up going through some kind of addiction leading to rehab and I think it all has to do with all the money they make. They make millions of dollars and figure they don't know what to do with it all so

let's go and spend it on alcohol and drugs, and end up ruining over lives.

It's living the trashy life, and only some make it out while the others continue to remain being trashed and drugged out.

Sweetin learned an important lesson from all of this.

"Everybody has to go through things like this; some of us have to do it more publicly, but I'm just really fortunate that I get to be honest and live my life the way I want to now," she said.

You can check out Sweetin's book now out on shelves.

'Twilight' is not romantic

By CHANTAL MCGOVERN
Staff Writer

Imagine this: A hot dude has been following you around for the past few months. Whenever you move his hands clench into a fist. He thirsts to lean into you and inhale your sweet scent. He'll glide his cold hand up your back and draw your neck to his lips. Then he is going to suck the sweet life out of you.

And how is this romantic??

Over the past twelve months "Twilight" has been brought into conversations everywhere causing girls of all ages to squeal with giddy laughter. Next Friday, Nov. 20, I won't be able to hear my own thoughts because "New Moon" is coming to the box office.

Then when "Eclipse" comes out on June 20, 2010, I'm going to run for cover because girls are going to be flocking to the movies to see "Edward," Robert Pattinson, with his shirt off.

Really?

I was an avid fan of the book "Twilight" and couldn't wait to see the movie. To my dismay "Twilight", the movie was 122 minutes of pure torture; bad acting and unrealistic situations made me want to get mauled by a vampire.

In "New Moon," Edward leaves Bella Swan, played by Kristen Stewart. Bella then replaces Edward with Jacob Black played by Taylor Lautner.



Photo courtesy of Summit Entertainment
Jacob's six-pack makes him the better choice for Bella.

I honestly hope that Bella ends up with Jacob in the end and the "Twilight" series would be finished forever.

However, as we all know, Bella goes crawling back to Edward, meaning more awful movies are yet to come.

So I'm all for Team Jacob. Jacob has a much better six pack! Edward can get lost and go stalk Bella from the woods.

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Arts & Entertainment

Boston is the new Hollywood

The city makes a great location for movie scenes

BY NICOLE SCOPIA
Arts & Entertainment Editor

We have Hollywood, and then we have Boston.

Boston is known for many things, but one thing that some people may be unaware of is all these memorable movies that were filmed in the city.

According to Boston.com, there are 10 memorable movies that were filmed in Boston. These movies being:

"The Friends of Eddie Coyle," "The Verdict," "The Brink's Job," "Good Will Hunting," "Monument Ave.," "Next Stop Wonderland," "Mystic River," "Gone Baby Gone," "The Departed," and finally "Mystery Street." All brilliant movies, filmed way back from the 70's through to the early 2000's.

Boston is definitely not camera shy as three major movies are being filmed there now. So far there has been, "The Town," starring Ben Affleck, "The Zookeeper," starring Kevin James and finally "Knight and a Day,"

starring two actors whom are no strangers in Boston, Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz. This movie was titled "Wichita," before but is now permanently changed for those that are concerned.

As for the release dates of these movies, "The Town," is said to be released September of next year, "The Zookeeper," will be released October of next year and "Knight and a Day," will be released July of next year.

So, is it possible that Boston could be the new Hollywood? Maybe not exactly, but close enough. These movies are sure to bring some action and comedy to the streets of Boston. Just remember if you hear any gun shots, they're most likely from a scene in one of the movies.

I've seen people write on various web sites asking why everyone makes a big deal every time a movie gets filmed in Boston.

I'll admit when I hear about movies being filmed in Boston I don't exactly jump out of my seat because I can't just walk down the street and see it happening, but if I lived in Boston I can see how it'd be a big deal.

It isn't every day you see Tom Cruise, Ben Affleck or Cameron Diaz running through the streets of Boston, so if people are fans

they're obviously going to make a big deal about it.

Filming movies in Boston is a great thing, and I'm glad it continues to happen because I don't think Boston gets much recognition other than Fenway Park. Now, all these cities in the Boston area like Worcester and Somerville will be getting noticed. Be honest, if you lived in Worcester you'd be bragging to everyone that Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz filmed a movie there. Not only that, but it also brings great revenue to Boston.

The movie that is getting the most recognition is "Knight and a Day."

The stunts are proven to make for a good movie, however, the big problem is all the drivers are complaining because many highways and roads are being blocked off for filming.

Thankfully, the Boston Herald has provided a list to its readers letting them all know which highways and roads will be blocked off for filming and when.

These movies won't be filming for much longer so make sure if you get a chance to go into the Boston area, try to track down Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz.



Courtesy photo

Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz are currently taking over the streets of Boston filming their movie, "Knight and a Day."

A remake gone bad

'Boondock Saints II' is clearly no match to the original movie

BY STAN PITTOUNICOS
Correspondent

It's sad to say that the sequel to the cult classic 1999 "Boondock Saints," did nothing to contend with its predecessor. "Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day," directed by Troy Duffy, a New England native, starred many of the same actors as the original, but for whatever reasons these actors seemed to have completely forget their character, acting skills, and integrity.

The quirky mannerisms of Sean Patrick Flanery and Norman Reedus set me off from the beginning, making the film seem more like a spoof than a dramatic action flick that the "fraternal Irish brothers" portrayed in the previous movie.

The cheap, corny jokes had the two men just short of winking at the camera in some desperate attempt for laughs. The cast acted as if it were their first day of high school theater class, delivering lines in such an immature style I felt like I was watching some sort of "Scary Movie" spin-off.

The only real difference in cast was the replacement of Willem Dafoe's character, FBI Agent Smecker with Julie Benz's character Agent Eunice Bloom. She does a meager job trying to impersonate Dafoe's performance by mimicking small mannerisms and gestures of his character in the original film.

The three local bonehead Boston cops "Dolly, Duffy and Greeny," played by the same actors



Photo courtesy of Apparition Films

Norman Reedus and Sean Patrick Flanery play twin brothers in the Boston-set gangster film "Boondock."

as the original, must have got paid half as much for this film because they put in less than half the effort. There characters were mildly funny in the original and fit the part well, but they must have lost their touch in the ten years between films because their shabby acting did little to impress.

Acting aside, the plot was another major downfall of the movie. The film did such a poor job trying to intertwine a new plot with that of the original it left me with a headache.

There were random flashbacks telling stories that have little to do

with the plot, dead characters from the first film appearing in ghost form, and scenes of overly sensational shootouts that only belittle the whole film.

I am a big fan of the original film and it is too bad that the director went in the direction he did. There was a fairly large cult following of the Boondock Saints, and I believe that true fans will feel the same way I that do about the sequel.

The scariest part is that they left the ending open for there to be a third film, hopefully they stop there before Duffy goes down the path of the "Saw" films.

Say Anything

Third album released is more mainstream and modern

BY MYKE KNAPP
Correspondent

Released on Nov. 3, Say Anything's self-titled third studio album provides fans with a refreshing and entertaining twist on a modern sound. Say Anything's new sound on the album follows the lighter side of their last album, "In Defense Of The Genre," but with a hint of the edginess that was their first album, "...Is A Real Boy."

Max Bemis, front man for the band, proves once again that he is a lyrical genius, spouting lines like, "It's ego freaks and drama queens, the young at heart know what I mean," from the song "Do Better," and, "Where those who bearing bodies in their barrels of fun will be marched through museums that display what they've done," from "Ahh...Men."

Songs like "Do Better" and "Crush'd" will appeal to fans of 3OH!3, with the tracks filled

with danceable synth tracks and tongue-in-cheek phrases. There are songs like "Hate Everyone," "Property," and "Less Cute."

These quirky tracks fall outside the norm for most pop punk bands, which is where Say Anything feels most at home.

The sound the band puts out this time around seems to have gone more mainstream, but old fans will still find quality songs to pique their interest, and new fans will find it easier to get into.

Following the idea of their last album, Bemis included a couple tracks, "She Won't Follow You" and "Cemetery," with guest vocals from the singer of the band Eisley, who happens to be married to Bemis.

The two stand out tracks are "Eloise" and "Ahh...Men." The first is the classic break-up song with a lyrically cynical twist. The second starts as an acoustic ballad and eventually builds into an all out gang vocal anthem, making it probably the best track on the CD.

Overall, this is one of the most unique and surprisingly catchy albums I've heard this year. The album earns an 8/10. It will grow on you.



Features

Swissed Missed 2: Electric Boogaloo

Rogue coffee machine continues to terrorize college students

By PATRICIA SMITH
Features Editor

This is a bit of a continuation of the article in the Features section of our last issue entitled, "Swiss Missed." Where do I begin? One day, on a dark and stormy night, I ran down to Jitters to grab a cup of joe as I was extremely tired. I asked the woman if she had any coffee other than Starbucks. She said no.

Cool, I thought to myself. You see, I have been boycotting Starbucks for the past two years. It all started out when I became addicted to it. I knew that I had had a problem when my roommate watched me scrounge change from off of ground in order to grab my next "hit," aka Venti Caramel Macchiato.

My roommate grabbed me, held me by my shoulders, looked me in the eyes and said, "Patricia, it's not your fault. It's not your fault." Tears welled up into my eyes. "Don't <expletive> with me, man." Okay, so none of that actually ever happened. But it would have been pretty cool if it did though. No, actually I just thought that I should quit it because

wasn't even that good in the first place, and it was really, really expensive.

Do you know how hard it is to quit a Starbucks? It just follows you around all day long, as if it were your long lost imaginary friend ala Drop Dead Fred. At my last job, we received gift certificates if we sold a certain amount of furniture in a day. "This competition should be fun for everyone except for Patricia," my manager often told us. Not to mention the fact that when I went shopping with my friend in Miami, there were about 20 other Starbucks in a 10 mile radius and one Panera. I'll choose Panera, thank you very much.

Much to my dismay and total lack of a surprise when I was told by the fine Jitters employee that, "We only carry Starbucks," I began walking away murmuring, "Yeah, I figured as much." What was I going to do now? Suddenly, a shining beacon of hope hit my senses. That shining beacon of hope was the coffee vending machine.

Maybe it's not that bad? I thought to myself as I looked at it for about 15 seconds. I remember the same phrase repeating over and over again in my mind: maybe it's not that bad? Was I really going to do this? Was that actually just coming off of the area from where the coffee was coming from? Does the Observer staff really know that I'm currently having existential thoughts right now?

I placed the coins into the slot of the machine and heard the jingle and jangle of the quarters as I hit espresso and it vibrated, jirated and made some funny sounding noises as if it were on it's last leg. All of the sudden a cup dropped down from up inside of it. I saw some funny looking blackness being poured out into the cup. Well, I thought to myself, the deed's done now. There's no turning back from it.

I brought my tarry concoction back into the staff room with cup in hand. "Look at what I've got!" I yelled at them. It was production night. And the place was bumping with many Observer staff members old and anew as a form of a spring semester reunion.

"You're not really going to drink that, are you?" asked former Opinion staff member Hansel Lopez. I thought about it for about 5 seconds and looked back at him. "Do it," he said.

I tilted my head back and let the viscous brew slip down into my throat and into my stomach. It tasted wretched. It was really thick, and had some kind of a bad concrete aftertaste to it. Not that I know what concrete tastes like. In those three seconds I got really, really spastic; more spastic than I have felt before in my entire life from a single espresso shot. And I've tried the strongest - my friend once dared me to try a Cortadito in Florida after she had

gotten sick from it.

A few staff members had smiles on their faces asking how it had tasted. "Disgusting," I had told them. Right about then, correspondent Babak Alian walked into the staff room and I had told him what happened. Perfect timing couldn't be any more perfect.

As amusingly as it sounded, it turns out, that he was actually writing a piece about the disgustingness that was coffee vending machine at that very moment. "Right? Isn't it disgusting?!" he had asked. I knew the look of upset in his eyes all too well, only his beef was with the hot chocolate.

There's something to be said about drinking a really bad hot chocolate. Particularly on a snowy day after you have been waiting in a classroom for it for the past three hours. You take a sip, realize that it tastes awful, and then want to spit it out, but you can't because you're out in public. So you take a few more sips hoping that it was all in your head but realize that it wasn't so you make a bee line for the trash can whilst contemplating the hard earned time and money that you had just spent and wasted on it. It's almost criminal in a sense.

So my dear Observer reading friend, I'm leaving it entirely up to you. I believe that we all deserve something far more better than Starbucks or even coffee vending machines in general for that matter

around NECC. If you must, couldn't it just be a little bit more updated instead of questionably from the 60's during the times of Jimmy Hendrix and Janis Joplin? Maybe something that serves us standard coffee rather than one that makes you question it for about 30 seconds? Mind over matter. Mind over matter you tell yourself... it's only mind over matter...

I mean they're both pretty much on opposite sides of the spectrum financially and taste wise anyway. One is ridiculously overpriced and the other is on the verge of offensive tasting. All we need to do is gather together around NECC and let NECC hear our cries. We will not let our voices go unheard. We will no longer tolerate victims leaving behind notes by the coffee machines reading, "This chocolate is not even worth a penny..." It's the equivalent of a coffee hit and run to the senses. It's the equivalent of putting 25 cents into those little toy machines at the grocery store when you were younger but having it not be as cool as you thought because it would be because it was a bouncy ball and once you had bounced it, it had actually bounced away to under somebody else's car in the parking lot but your mom had you keep walking whilst holding her hand because...no?...no?... never?... er... it's like that purple plastic egg that opens up to be a spider ring. Yeah... it's like that.

Staying sane and saving

By SAM SAWYER
Opinion Editor

Even in a tough economy, we all want to be entertained. In fact, I would go so far as to say we need more entertainment than ever in these tough times. There are ways to keep yourself sane with quality content and products while still pinching your ever-precious figurative pennies.

With their incessant banner, pop up, and television advertisements, I think it's safe to say that just about every American consumer is aware of Netflix's existence. To make sure, I'll sum it up: Netflix gives its users access to over 100,000 DVD's that are shipped to their house in one business day. They can keep the DVD for as long as they want, whether it's a day or two months, with no late fees. When they're finished, they put it back in the mail to the closest Netflix shipping center (ours is in Worcester) which takes about one business day, and another one is immediately shipped. The only limit to how many DVD's you can get per month is how fast you can watch them. Every Netflix user also has access to over 13,000 TV shows and movies which stream extremely fast through their computer, certain types of TV's, a set top box called a Roku box (which costs a one time fee of \$100) and Xbox 360's. For a one DVD at a time plan (which includes the online access) it is just \$8.99 per month. I use Netflix, and I have been so thoroughly impressed with it that I recommend it any chance I get. \$9 a month for that much content is unparalleled, and more than worth your money.

Newegg.com is truly a wonder of a site. They offer deals that are rarely matched by retailers or other sites. They sell computers, computer accessories TV's, gaming consoles, video games, cameras and camcorders, cell phones, software, and even home and gardening products, for consistently low prices. They also offer free, fast shipping on everything from a computer mouse to a flat screen TV. For example, the game Forza Motorsport 3 for the Xbox 360 just game out, and is sold universally by retailers for \$60. On Newegg, it is offered for \$51.99 with free shipping.

Most Americans pay anywhere from \$15-\$40 per month for cable. Along with that, they have to put up with over 2 minutes of advertising per 7 minutes of content. Luckily, there is light at the end of the tunnel for consumers: hulu.com. Hulu is a website that is jointly owned by a number of different television companies. They offer their content online with commercials ranging from 5 to 30 seconds per 7 minutes of content, compared with traditional cable's 180. It is completely free, legal, reliable, and is presented in a high quality format. You can pause, comment on, review, rate, and embed anything from The Simpsons to The Daily Show to Grey's Anatomy. In addition, they offer classic and cancelled shows, and a growing library of movies like Supersize Me, Dawn of the Dead, and The Good the Bad and the Ugly. After using Hulu, cable starts to seem like an unnecessary expense.

It's never been a better time to be an educated consumer. More than ever, we can't afford to be ripped off.

Sudoku intelligence

Studies show Sudoku may help to ward off mental decline

By BRITTANY HADDAD
Correspondent

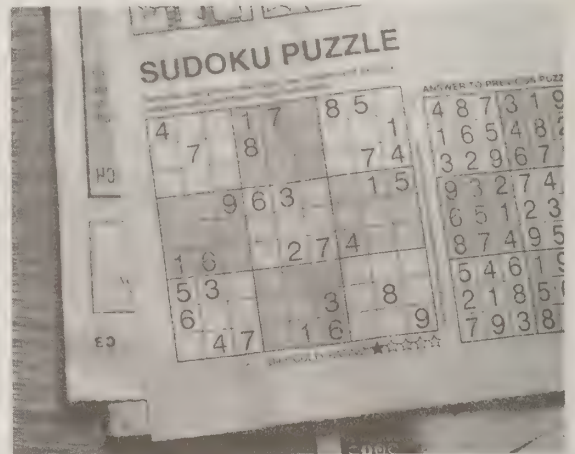
Recent studies have shown that Sudoku can help keep your brain functioning up to 14 years younger and can help ward off both mental illness and Alzheimer's. Cambridge University has noted that these seemingly simple puzzles can "also buffer the consequences of disorders such as Schizophrenia."

Sudoku is an immensely popular number puzzle. It features a nine by nine grid where the numbers one through nine must be placed in each three by three square. The challenge to this growing craze is that the same number cannot repeat within a row column or three by three box.

Sounds easy, but let me know how many times you throw down your pencil scribble on the puzzle and perhaps shout a profanity when you've realized you made a mistake. Don't worry in the beginning we all go through it, but do not give up.

Not only is Sudoku something to do to pass the time, but it's been proven to help keep your brain in top working condition. Cognitive psychologists and neurologists have found that memories start to decline as early as our early 20's.

So despite the fact that we are



Wire photo

Next time you play Sudoku in class, you can tell your professor it's helping you to study.

constantly being stimulated here at NECC everyday as well as students attending college around the country, many of our memories are already starting to slip!

According to research done at Trinity College in Dublin, Sudoku puzzles create mental stimulation to help ward off the decline of brain function. Michael Mepham, author of "Total Sudoku" stated, "The young strengthen their core mathematical skills of reasoning and logic, while the old can fight dementia and memory loss."

The University of Edinburgh in the UK has found benefits to puzzles like Sudoku. Subjecting your brain to Sudoku has been found to

trigger "survival genes" in our brains that would otherwise lay dormant. These survival genes help brain cells to live longer and can resist disease, stroke, and the effects of drugs.

It was thought that with age brain cells tend to lose their strength and are lost. There is now evidence that through using Sudoku as a type of brain work out, you can now acquire new cells through out your life if you continue to stimulate the brain.

This therefore is clear: you either use it or lose it. Using Sudoku to stimulate the brain is not only enjoyable but also a healthy reward.

Instant replay needed...now!

Incorrect calls played an unnecessary role in the postseason

BY MATT MCCARRON
Sports Editor



Now that the 2009 Major League Baseball postseason is over the brass, including Commissioner Bud Selig must take a

hard look at what can be improved and what must change completely.

The first and most glaring problem has to do with the umpires making poor calls and having a negative impact on the game. The 2009 postseason was riddled with so-called "experienced" umpires making mistakes on blatantly obvious calls. What made matters worse was the fact that within 10 seconds of the controversial call or play happening television replay showed the world the verdict.

Game 4 of the American League Championship Series between the New York Yankees and Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim was the pinnacle, the crème de la crème so to speak of terrible calls. There were three missed calls in this game alone.

Mistake number one came in the

fourth inning. Yankees outfielder Nick Swisher was caught off second base, the tag was made, and Swisher was out, right? Nope, second base umpire Dale Scott called Swisher safe. The magic of instant replay showed everyone, except Scott, the correct call. Swisher was out.

The second debacle of the night also came in the fourth, just minutes after the first. Third base umpire Tim McClelland ruled that Nick Swisher, who had just received the gift from Dale Scott, had left third base early on a sac-fly and was called out, costing the Yankees a run. Replay clearly showed that Swisher had not left early.

The two calls were nothing, and I mean nothing like the situation that would take place in the following inning.

With one out in the fifth New York's Nick Swisher hit a ground ball, Angel's relief pitcher Darren Oliver made a throw home to prevent Yankees catcher Jorge Posada from scoring. That's when things started to unravel. Posada, caught in a rundown tried to make is way back to third. While this was happening second baseman Robinson Cano made his way from second to third. In his haste to reach third Posada overran the base, and Cano, for some unknown reason stood a few feet off the base. Angel's catcher Mike Napoli applied a tag to both Posada and Cano. Both men were off the base at the time of tag, so both should have been called out. However McClelland called Posada out but ruled that Cano should be allowed to stay at third. No

one will ever know what McClelland was thinking when he made the call, only he knows the answer to that.

The Yankees went on to win the game by a large margin, 10-1, however the damage had already been done. This wasn't a call that should have required instant replay to tell the viewer, or umpire for that case, the correct call. The play unfolded within feet of McClelland's two eyes. There was absolutely no reason why a professional umpire should make such a blatant mistake.

After the game was over the umpires review close calls made during the game. McClelland, after reviewing the tape and seeing his error faced many question from the media and fans alike.

"On the play with Cano and Posada, I thought Cano was on the base. I was waiting for two players to be on the base, and when there was never the situation where both of them were on the base at the same time. When he tagged Cano, I thought Cano was on the base, and when Jorge touched the base and continued and tagged Posada out, I thought Posada was out.

"(The replay) showed that Cano was off the bag when he was tagged. I did not see that for whatever reason. I'm just out there trying to do my job and do it the best I can," said McClelland.

Another controversial call came in game 3 of the World Series. Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez hit a deep shot to right field. The ball appeared to hit a television camera that was hanging out



MCT Campus photo

Umpire Gerry Davis signals homerun after reviewing a ball hit by Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez.

into the field of play. The original call was it wasn't a homerun. Thankfully this time the umpires conversed and went to replay to review the call. After watching the video they ruled it was in fact a homerun. The advantages of instant replay were there for all to see.

Major League Baseball has to institute some form of instant replay, at least for fair and foul balls, and close plays at the plate. These are areas of the game that can't be left to chance, especially in the postseason.

Those who think it will slow down the game must realize that a group of empires getting together to review a call, or a manager coming out of the dugout to argue takes the same amount, if not more time than instant replay would. The outcome of a team's entire season can rest with just one call.

It is time for Major League Baseball to join the 21st century and use replay for the benefit of the game.

Abundance of talent

Men's basketball team returns 4 out of 5 starters

BY MATT MCCARRON
Sports Editor

The 2009-10 season should be a very productive and memorable one for the Northern Essex Men's Basketball team. Last year the Knights posted a record of 16-11 and were eliminated in the Sweet 16 of the Region XXI Tournament. This year they look to improve on last year's mark and make it deeper into the tournament.

Head Coach Darren Stratton said the team performed well last year, especially since many on the team were young and in their first year at Northern Essex.

"Last year we had all freshman, our expectation is much higher this year," said Stratton.

He said he hopes the team will "win their region, make it to the NJCAA Tournament, and play in the Elite 8."

Stratton's expectations should be attainable with the number starters returning to the team, not to mention the new crop of talent that has joined the team.

The team has four of five possible starters returning from last year's squad. Leading the team will be second year captains Leo Liriano and Anthony Siri. Siri, a 6-foot-2 guard played in all 27 games last season while leading the team in points (18.8 average). For his efforts Siri was named to the All-Region 21 team.

Entering this season Siri said his hopes for the team is to "win it all."

However he didn't get too far ahead of himself, saying the team had to make sure to "take it one game at a time."

Liriano, a 6-foot-4 guard is looking to start anew and improve on last year. After transferring from Division 1 Tennessee Tech Liriano was plagued by injuries last season, causing him to miss a total of seven games.

"I hope to stay healthy," Liriano said.

He also agreed with is teammate on taking it one game at a time. When asked what the team goals were going into this season he said "Our goal is to go all the way."

Siri and Liriano will not be going it alone. The third returning starter, Haverhill's own Ismael Rios will once again bring add his up-tempo play to the already impressive Knights backcourt. The 5-foot-10 Rios led the team last season in 3-point percentage (39.4 average) while contributing 12 points per game.

The fourth returning starter is 6-foot-3 forward Carlos Gutlermo. He averaged 7.2 rebounds last season, his first at NECC.

The Knights have also added newcomers to the roster, including Methuen's Edwin Gonzalez. The Methuen High School alumnus was named co-MVP in the Merrimack Valley Conference last year.

The interior, the area around and under the basket should be dominated by 6-foot-6 center Joshua Burk.



Courtesy photo

Returning Knights guard Anthony Siri.

With so much talent at every position Stratton should be busy switching and moving players in and out of the game.

Stratton said the team will play their trademark fast-paced, run-and-gun style of basketball that should make for good, entertaining basketball for the fans.

"We'll be exciting to watch, for the community," Stratton said.

With that said, the upcoming season should definitely be something to watch.

The Knights will face off against Mass Bay Community College on Nov. 17 in their second home game of the season.

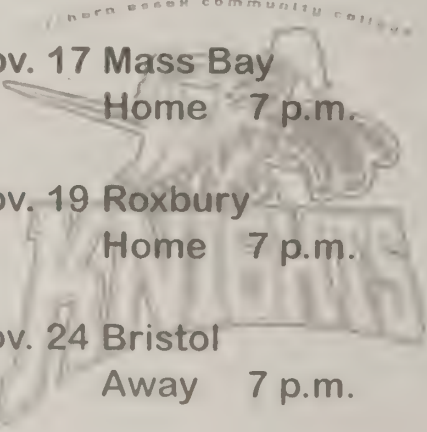
NECC KNIGHTS ATHLETIC SCHEDULE Men's Basketball

Nov. 14 UConn Avery Point
Away 3 p.m.

Nov. 17 Mass Bay
Home 7 p.m.

Nov. 19 Roxbury
Home 7 p.m.

Nov. 24 Bristol
Away 7 p.m.



Sports

Celts off to a hot start

New additions add depth and experience to the team's roster

By MATT MCCARRON
Sports Editor

It has been just over two weeks since the Boston Celtics started the 2009-2010 regular season, and it hasn't taken them long to get off to another roaring start. The Celtics are currently 7-1, with a three game lead in the Eastern Conference.

The offseason additions, including forward/center Rasheed Wallace, forward Shelden Williams, and Marquis Daniels have made valuable contributions to the team. Wallace has been a force off the bench in the first six games for the Celtics, averaging 10.6 points per game. Wallace scored 20 points going 6-of-8 from beyond the arch to help the Celtics prevail over the Philadelphia 76ers. Williams and Daniels have averaged 6.9 and 5.7 points respectively.

The newcomers haven't been the only reason the team has gotten off to a good start. The Big Three, Paul Pierce, Ray Allen, and Kevin Garnett have played the most minutes per game, not like there is any surprise there. More importantly the Big Three have delivered where it matters most, scoring points. The team has been lead by team captain Paul Pierce (18.8 average). Three point and free throw extraordinaire Ray Allen is second (14.8 average).

Even though Pierce and Allen are the two leading scorers on the team, the third man on the list is arguably the most valuable one. Kevin Garnett has contributed much more than points so far this season. Garnett, who missed 25 games and the entire 2009 playoffs with a knee injury has brought his leadership, determination and defense back to the team. Defense has been the reason for the C's early season success. In the C's sixth consecutive win Garnett stopped Corey Brewer in the final seconds, preventing a game-tying basket.

Point guard Rajon Rondo has also started off the 2009-2010 season in good form, leading the team in assists (9.0 average). He continues to exhibit that passing ability; whether it's an open Garnett in the paint, Pierce open for a mid-range jumper, or Allen for a wide-open three, Rondo has firmly established himself as one of the game's preeminent passers.

Rondo was rewarded for his play on Nov. 2 when the Celtics extended his contract. The contract was a multi-year extension, however the terms of the deal were not disclosed due to team policies.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to extend Rajon's contract," said Celtics President of Basketball Operations, Danny Ainge. "We believe that he is one of the elite point guards in the NBA and has a tremendous future ahead of him."

Rondo was more than worthy of his extension. In his six years in the league he has achieved career-highs



MCT Campus photo

Rasheed Wallace attempts to block LeBron James during the season opener.

in points (953), rebounds (416), assists (659), and steals (149).

This season Rondo currently leads the NBA in steals (3.12 average), is second in assists (72), and is fourth in assists per game (9.0 average).

With all of the new additions to the roster and the proven leadership both starting and coming off the bench the Celtics have asserted themselves as a force to be reckoned with and a major contender to once again challenge for another NBA championship.

It's never too late to play

NECC student gains newfound success on Volleyball team

By MICHELE SIMON
Correspondent



Students who play on sports teams have been doing it for years, sometimes since junior high, the average person wouldn't stand a chance to get on

a team, right?

That's not always the case, as Kimberly Lebron proved when she joined the Northern Essex Community College Volleyball team this year, having never played on a sports team before.

Kim is currently a full time student at NECC and is juggling two jobs. She said she always wanted to go out and play sports before but didn't have the time. She had to work, baby-sit or had other priorities including school.

She didn't let her lack of experience get in the way of trying out though. Armed only with a few tips from a friend, she took the first brave step of contacting the Athletics department and was soon after school, practicing with this year's newly re-created volleyball team.

"The first week I wasn't sure if I

wanted to stay but they said don't give up. Just go and try it out and you'll probably like it," she said.

So with resolve she continued on. "I did not know how the first practice was going to make me feel so sore," she said. "I realized how out of shape I really was and it made me determined to get better."

Her determination paid off as she was not only accepted on the team but also learned the sport well enough to play successfully during several games.

Learning a new sport may seem like a daunting task to a newcomer. The idea of trying to break into an already formed team might also make many think twice. Kim said her team members didn't treat her differently than any other player except offering tips and hints to help her out. "They were very encouraging," she said.

Shana Blaney, another new player to volleyball this year, also found her teammates supportive. Shana has played on both the Women's Basketball and Track and Field teams, and this season found joining volleyball as a new player was a challenge that she was up for. Shana said a lot of the team members were helpful and she was able to pick it up quick. But "it takes effort and attitude" to be successful, she said about joining a sport you haven't played before.

To others that haven't played a sport before, but would like to, Kim suggests you just go out there and try.

"Even though you may not think it's a good idea you should just try it

because you may end up liking it in the end. And you may learn new things about yourself."

Even at the college level there is still opportunity and openings for other new players. "We actually had to drop our women's basketball team this year because we couldn't get enough players" said Sue MacAvoy, coordinator of athletics for NECC and the volleyball head coach. They have also been trying for five years to form a softball team without success. MacAvoy attributes this to lack of interest and an early spring start. Many of the people who are interested in playing also play on other teams and by the time spring comes around they are looking forward to a break.

MacAvoy said the first step to joining or trying out for a team would be to contact her or Maureen Saliba, either by phone or email. There are also intramural sports, and they are looking into starting open basketball three nights a week, to try and get some more interest and fun back into the sport.

Kim is still practicing volleyball during the off season and hopes to get better and play next year. She is even considering trying out for Track and Field.

When asked to describe one game or moment that was the best for her, Kim said it was "the whole thing."

For more information on NECC athletics contact Sue MacAvoy at smacavoy@necc.mass.edu or 978-556-3820, or Maureen Saliba at msaliba@necc.mass.edu or 978-556-3718.

Weekly Sports Trivia QUESTIONS:

1. Who did the Red Sox acquire from the Florida Marlins on Nov. 6?

2. How many no-hitters have been thrown in Red Sox history?

3. How many numbers have the Boston Celtics retired?

4. Who was the first Celtic to be enshrined in the basketball Hall Of Fame?

5. What was Ray Allen's free throw percentage for the 2008-2009 season?

ANSWERS:
1. Jeremy Hermida
2. 18
3. 21
4. Ed Macauley
5. 95.2

Horoscopes

ARIES (March 21-April 20) Family history and old romantic memories will this week demand clarity. For some Aries natives, especially those born between 1955 and 1969, a rekindled love affair will captivate extra time. Unproductive patterns need to be resolved: expect dramatic confrontations and complex discussions over the next 6 weeks. After mid-week property contracts, deeds or leasing agreements may be unexpectedly postponed. Remain patient: new information will soon arrive.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20) Old friends or lovers may this week reappear and trigger intense memories. Past relationships will offer unique life lessons. Discuss all observations with loved ones and expect emotional suggestions or romantic speculation from close friends to be helpful. Later this week older colleagues or managers may request fast changes and new dedication. Long accepted policies or practices will soon demand bold improvements. Offer your skills: your talents are needed.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) Home discussions will this week help move key relationships forward. In the coming weeks some Geminis will gently expand their family or social obligations. If so, expect relations with older family members to also be a prime concern. Loved ones will need to express their private feelings:

remain open and wait for agreement. After Friday a two week period of fast business advancement and new job discussions begins. Ask for all that you want: it's time to expand.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Before mid-week close colleagues may reveal private information. Marital relations, family disputes or living arrangement are all highlighted. Listen to all revelations but avoid becoming emotionally involved. For many Cancerians workplace alliances will need extra time to properly develop. Friday through Sunday rest and spend extra time with an isolated friend, relative or colleague. Someone close may soon ask for deeply personal advice. Don't hesitate.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Financial and business messages may be misleading this week. Official communications or legal agreements will now be derailed by rare social politics or workplace conflict. Stay dedicated to short-term tasks and expect facts, figures and calculations to require careful scrutiny. Bosses or managers are watching your progress: stay active. Later this week some Leos may encounter a rare social introduction or flirtation. Trust your heart: powerful emotions will soon be revealed.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Educational projects and revised workplace skills are now a top priority. Early this week key

officials may demand improved job performance and completed assignments. Don't hesitate to increase your workload. By early December a new career path will be made available. Thursday through Saturday also highlights fast social changes and new romantic proposals. A brief phase of emotional isolation is now ending: use this time to expand key relationships and find new friends.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) Key officials will this week rely heavily on your ability to resolve interpersonal disputes. After Tuesday expect minor workplace arguments to quickly escalate. Remain determined to find harmony: in the coming weeks your emotional guidance will be greatly appreciated on the work scene. After mid-week watch also for a subtle compliment or comment from a trusted friend. Yesterday's disappointments or emotional triangles will soon fade. Stay open to new overtures.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Long-term romantic commitments now increase. Over the next few weeks many Scorpions will bring added emotional and financial security into their lives. Renewed family obligations, housing agreements or complex social promises are all accented. Respond quickly to all requests: loved ones will soon outline their goals and expectations. Later this week a recently distant or isolated colleague may ask for assistance or complex negotiations. Find the time: your help is needed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) After a brief phase of miscommunications, loved ones are now willing to adopt controversial ideas. Home expansion and social planning are a strong concern. Outdated plans and yesterday's aspirations need to fade: after Wednesday thoroughly discuss financial commitments. New daily guidelines are needed. Later this week some Sagittarians will experience a powerful wave of nostalgia and emotional clarity. Unproductive social patterns may require fast decisions: stay alert.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 20) Several weeks of social isolation will now fade. Before mid-week ask loved ones for added consideration or concrete decisions. Areas affected are housing contracts, family expansion or emotional agreements in the home. Don't be shy. New choices will work in your favor. Thursday through Saturday love relationships may challenge your social plans or family commitments. A trusted friend or lover will soon request a public declaration of love and support. Don't disappoint.

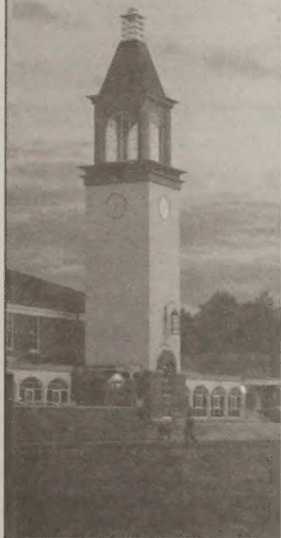
AQUARIUS (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) Workplace negotiations will work strongly to your advantage this week. After Tuesday watch for financial speculation to be replaced with timed agreement or complex contracts. In the coming weeks expect key officials to outline new business strategies and daily expectations. Revised rules are bothersome but

workable. Stay focused. Later this week a past lover or old friend may demand a second chance. Take your time and consider all consequences: passions will be high.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Business relations now improve. Early this week some Pisceans will be asked to take on a complicated project or new job description. If so, expect the coming weeks to bring fast workplace changes and new financial resources. Before mid-December quick decisions may be necessary. Stand your ground: your ideas are valid. After Thursday ask a friend or relative to participate in family events. Home relations and social harmony will soon increase. Stay dedicated.

If your birthday is this week...over the next three months love relationships will experience serious discussions and new emotional rules. Home agreements or family goals may need to be publicly resolved. Respond quickly to complex proposals. After January 16th pay attention to property negotiations and financial restrictions. Money planning will inspire group speculation before early March. Use this time to settle outstanding debts or contracts. Throughout the spring and summer months family and romantic intimacy will increase. Remain open to new invitations. Much of the coming year will surprise social contacts and a steady expansion of romantic commitments. Stay open to new possibilities.

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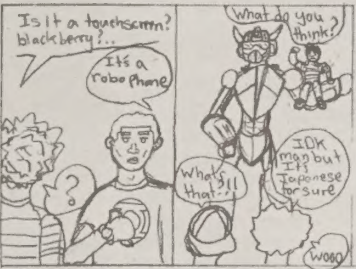
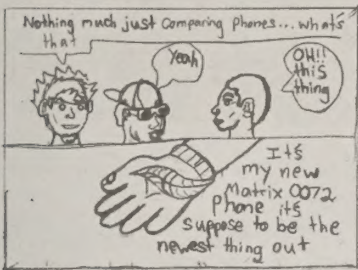
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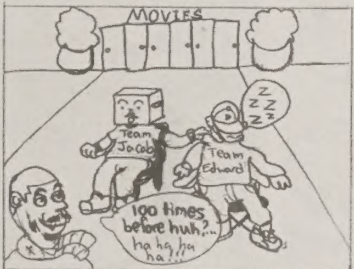
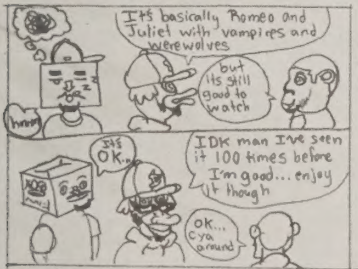
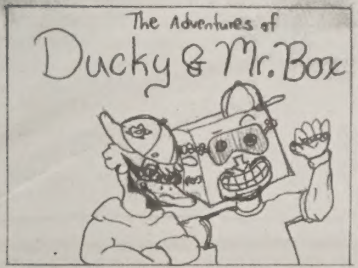
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The Funnies



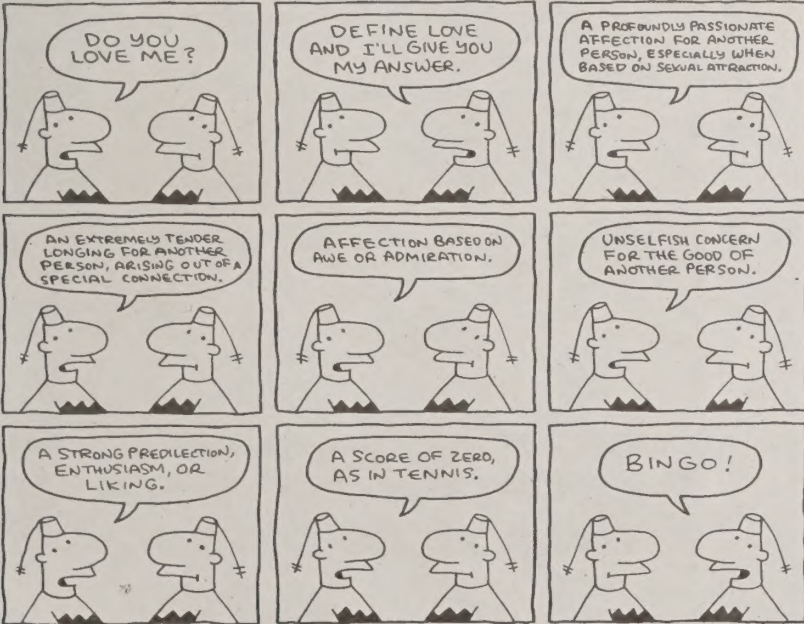
Christian Ramos comic



Christian Ramos comic

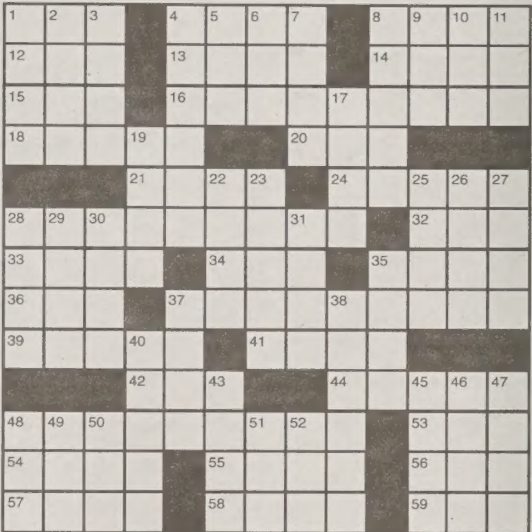
LIFE IS SWELL

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THE TV CROSSWORD

by Jacqueline E. Mathews



11/8/09

ACROSS

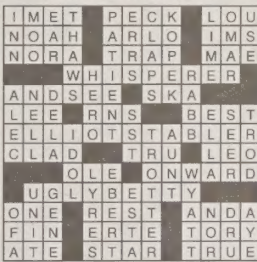
- 1 Actor Mantegna
- 4 Role on "Two and a Half Men"
- 8 Actress Sela
- 12 Ending for pay or snozz
- 13 Emperor who fiddled
- 14 Dry
- 15 "I'm with _"
- 16 "America's _"
- 18 Actor Nick
- 20 Finish
- 21 Jai
- 24 truTV's " _ Mission Road"
- 28 _ Eames; Kathryn Erbe's role
- 32 Historical period
- 33 Actress Spelling
- 34 Foot digit
- 35 Actor John of "Good Times"
- 36 Here, in Paris
- 37 "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" star
- 39 Japan's capital
- 41 "Auld Lang _"
- 42 "What Kind of Fool _?"
- 44 Bernie Mac, to Nessa & Jordan
- 48 Actor on "Scrubs"
- 53 Author Milne's monogram

- 54 " _ Anything"; tune from "Oliver!"
- 55 Name for five Norwegian kings
- 56 Large African antelope
- 57 Mexico's currency
- 58 _ a one; none at all
- 59 Bradley and O'Neill

DOWN

- 1 Stosel of "20/20"
- 2 Butter substitute
- 3 "My Name Is _"
- 4 _ Lansbury
- 5 _ G. Carroll of "Topper"
- 6 Mr. Linkletter
- 7 Memo
- 8 Ralph _ Emerson
- 9 "Car 54, Where _ You?"
- 10 "The Adventures of _ Tin Tin"
- 11 Insecticide letters of old
- 17 _ Nicole Smith
- 19 Danny DeVito/Judd Hirsch series
- 22 "Nay" voter
- 23 Kelly Clarkson and Carrie Underwood
- 25 Do, _ fa, so...
- 26 Jogging gait
- 27 Corned beef concoction
- 28 Hard _; working diligently
- 29 Crazy
- 30 Actor Estrada
- 31 Depend
- 35 Sherman Hemsley sitcom
- 37 In the _; not yet born
- 38 _ Smith; comic strip hillbilly
- 40 Popular search engine
- 43 Press clothes
- 45 Nicolas
- 46 "Promised _"
- 47 Australian birds
- 48 Close a jacket
- 49 Lemon drink
- 50 Music store purchases, for short
- 51 Apple pie _ mode
- 52 Distant

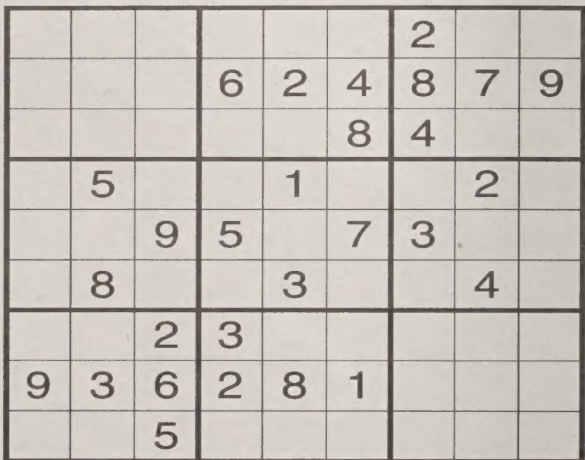
Solution to Last Week's Puzzle



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11/8/09

SUDOKU



Back Page

NECC's least known celebrities

Forget 'Meerkat Manor,' NECC has its own cast of animal characters

By TOM HANNON
Correspondent

As you hustle around campus, have you noticed those big brown things that look like over grown hamsters near the bushes? They can be seen sun bathing, always chewing something and are pretty shy. What are they is the question that needs some answering.

They are known as a woodchuck or ground hog, I had always thought the woodchuck and ground hog were different creatures, it turns out it has many names. They can also be called whistle pigs or land beavers. The scientific name is marmota monaxi. Most of us have a nickname, but these names are all official. It would probably be easier if the EPA stepped in and gave the poor creature one name to go by to save us the debate over what to call it.

Little did I know, our five-named creatures are celebrities! They had a movie named after them, "Groundhog Day," this movie starred Bill Murray, he gets stuck covering Punxsutawney Phil in Gobblers Noche, Pa. and he relives the same day endlessly. Things being what they are, I remain surprised PETA did not protest this movie as Murray

kidnaps Punxsutawney Phil and then committed suicide with him on several occasions. The part when the ground hog is driving the truck is belly-laughingly funny, even a PETA person may crack a grin.

Another Bill Murray movie "Caddyshack," featured a gopher, but if you look closely it is really a Ground Hog I think. Murray was in charge of capturing or killing it. He never did get him, but he tried hard. Murray managed to destroy the golf course and essentially ruined the golf tournament. The scene at the end with the ground hog dancing to Kenny Loggins song "I'm Alright," is priceless. Does Murray have an issue with these creatures?

They also have a day named after them, Ground Hog Day (not the movie, an actual day on the calendar), Feb. 2 each year, and curiously the Ground Hog has powers to predict the weather. It is all about their shadow, if it sees the shadow, six more long weeks of winter. Have you seen these things? It is virtually impossible for them to cast a shadow, but who are we to buck a tradition? If nothing else it gives us a day to wish winter was ending sooner.

In Disney's fictional universe, the Junior Woodchucks are Disney's Boy Scouts of America child organization. Did Walt not realize they had four other names to choose from or did he like Woodchuck over Ground Hog?

There is also a rhyme about them: "how many chucks can a

woodchuck chuck?" I have never seen them chuck anything to be honest, I only see them eating grass.

Can you see the name issues rising here? It could cause a problem, what if someone said Feb 2 is Woodchuck Day? Or Land Beaver Day, Whistle Pig Day, nobody would actually be wrong. It could cause confusion amongst the masses. Someone needs to get on this from EPA or Obama Administration. They are certainly trying to tackle everything else.

For us students, they provide a visual from time to time and let us know even in college we are not the only ones on this planet (even when we feel like we are). I wondered just what do these things do, who are they related too and should we be concerned about the infestation of them? I counted 15 while hustling to class last Tuesday.

NECC's landscaper Paul Pomafz said, "they are harmless mostly and we can't do much because if you trap them you are not allowed to move them." On why there are so many Pomafz said, "I think people trap them and drop them here, even though it is illegal." The following Web site, www.massaudubon.org, confirmed that is what is occurring.

Also, Pomafz wanted to add, "The College is requesting that students do not feed them, they are wild animals and they do not want them getting to close to students."

Pomafz said "the only problem he is dealing with the large burrows they create. There is one for you to



MCT Campus photo

Numerous groundhogs make their home on NECC's Haverhill campus.

view behind the Tech Building near the walkway, it is huge."

Woodchucks are members of the squirrel family. They are the largest of all squirrels. They are stocky, weigh 5-15 lbs when mature, and have short ears and legs relative to their body. In northern states, they will hibernate. They like to feed in the early morning and late afternoon. It is common to see them lying in the sun around their burrows at anytime during the day. They reproduce once a year and produce litters which have four to eight young. Populations usually don't grow too large yet they mere existence can cause economic damage.

They will readily burrow under the slabs of homes which leads to structural problems. More devastating are the broken legs and other injuries horses and cattle sustain from stepping in a burrow. This is why horse farms, cattle ranches and any farm which has large livestock must keep their populations to a minimum.

So if you're a farmer they are an issue but if you feel the corner of the building shaking during class, your friendly neighborhood groundhog may be to blame. Otherwise stop and check them out, ask for an autograph (the curiosity of what name they will use is nail biting), after all they are national celebrities!

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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP -
GLOBAL CLASSROOM DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM

Next program begins the week of 1/11

Experience a Global Classroom:

- Transfer up to 80 quarter hours or 60 semester hours of undergraduate credit to begin working on your bachelor's degree
- Join a program that attracts students from around the world to our Boston campus
- Gain access to the workforce through internships at global organizations
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn a foreign language and enhance your marketability
- Short- and long-term housing assistance available

Other Degree Completion Options

Find out more about our other online and on-campus degree completion programs in areas such as Information Technology, Management, Finance & Accounting Management, and more

Scholarships up to \$10,000 over the course of the BS in Leadership - Global Classroom program are available for the 1/11 program start.

www.northeastern.edu/cps/globalclassroom/